



*Francis Hargrave.*





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H I S T O R Y

OF THE

DUTCH REPUBLIC.

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K. Gresham,  
United Provinces of the

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# HISTORY

OF THE

## DUTCH REPUBLIC,

FOR

THE LAST TEN YEARS,

RECKONING FROM THE YEAR 1777.

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Respublica incolumis, et privatas res salvas facile præstat:  
Publica prodendo sua nequicquam servant.

*T. Livius, lib. xxvi.*

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VOL. I.

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MDCCLXXXVII.





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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
D U T C H R E P U B L I C.

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S E C T I O N I.

**P**ARTIES whether operating upon the whole for the good or evil of a country, are inseparable from every form of free government ; and the conduct of the great leaders of them, or the motives that determine them to action, present us with a subject of contemplation or inquiry equally useful, instructive and interesting. It however for the most part unfortunately happens, that, except what the legislature, from

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political views, thinks proper formally to avow, the original causes of the internal contests and dissensions in any state are little known or understood. Not only the causes, but even many of the consequences, the effects, nay simple facts, are either wholly unknown, or so obscured by groundless conjecture or fabulous relation, as to render it difficult to remove the uncertainty and contradiction in which they are frequently involved. Such authentic memorials as convey the truth with precision are not always within the reach of the majority of mankind; and the great actors on those occasions who may have access to them, do not often give such narratives of the transactions or the counsels in which they have been themselves engaged, as are answerable to the ideas which their characters have excited, or to the fame which has been acquired by their exploits. And indeed in modern times it has very seldom happened that these great men have given any satisfactory narrative at all of the affairs in which

they have acted. Whether it be that the multiplicity of their engagements and the magnitude of the objects which employ their attention do not allow them leisure to compose any thing of this kind, or that the violence incidental to intestine dissensions destroys whatever they may have done in this way. Perhaps disesteem and contempt of the public transactions of their own times, as not worth relating, may be partly the cause. For certainly we often see that wise men of the most extensive talents, and every way the best qualified for the performance of such a work, have forbore to write relations of their own age, while they beheld with just disdain, not only how unworthy, how disgraceful, how corrupt, but often how low, how mean, how trifling, how ignoble, how beneath all notice of posterity or foreigners, the persons and the actions are of those who, either by fortune or some accidental election, attain, as a fore judgment and ignominy upon the land, to have the chief power in managing the affairs of the commonwealth. The characters and



the exploits of such men are better befriended by obscurity than fame; and of this they seem to be themselves so sensible, that they choose for the office of relating them frivolous, mercenary and illiterate writers, such indeed as they best deserve and are best pleased with, wanting either judgment to prefer better, or innocence to venture upon inviting the severe and searching style of a faithful, intelligent and independent man to examine and to describe their conduct, their principles, and their actions. Hence it generally comes to pass that, in the accounts which we have of the transactions of our own days, we find little more than an indistinct noise of tumults and battles, or confused relations of counsels and measures; and these too for the most part so corrupted by adulation, in our free country most commonly the effect of hope or of reward, but on the continent of dread of resentment, as to serve rather to disgust than to inform. It may be well supposed that compositions of this kind can afford but little instruction, utility, or amusement to

enlarged

enlarged minds; for particular cases and unconnected facts are things inanimate and unproductive, while principles alone are living, fruitful and active. Whoever then hopes to entertain or to inform men of sense and reflection on such subjects as the internal and cotemporary dissensions of neighbouring states, must give an accurate and comprehensive view of the objects which he undertakes to represent, as well as an impartial delineation of the characters of those who acted the chief parts in the transactions which he relates. He must endeavour to connect counsels with the motives which produced them; to expose resolutions by the causes which brought them into existence; to account for general events by the private views of particular parties or individuals; and to pursue measures to the probable consequences attending them as they may be judged of by experience or supported by rational deduction. How arduous an enterprize this is to be undertaken, may be easily conceived. Still however it must be attempted by whoever de-



fires to convey information of the transactions of men acquainted with the arts of civil life and the refinements of policy. Without it, the depredations of barbarians unacquainted with society, or the ravages of the beasts of the forest, might be as well described, and related with equal pleasure and advantage. Certainly at least, without something of this kind, to explain clearly the causes of the dissensions which at this time distract the Dutch republic, would be impossible. And while persons more equal to this business may be engaged in affairs of greater moment, or, if not, may be prevented by some private or personal considerations from entering upon such a subject, I shall endeavour, from such materials as I have by me, and a long acquaintance with the people and the affairs of the United Netherlands, to set the parties and the causes of the discontents in that commonwealth in a proper light to my countrymen. This I shall do without regard to hatred or affection for any man or faction, and without meaning disrespect where characters,

acters, or counsels, or actions happen to be censured, or intending adulation where these circumstances are applauded or approved; having, as an independent citizen of a country free enough to allow truth to be published, and powerful enough to protect its members from any resentment that may be excited by that publication, little to apprehend from the anger or to hope from the patronage of the persons whose principles or conduct are the subjects of this discourse on the affairs of the Dutch commonwealth.

The Dutch commonwealth has been from its first rise divided into three parties; the violent republicans, the partisans of the house of Orange, and the moderate men or *whimsicals*, as they have been sometimes called. The city and magistracy of Amsterdam have been generally the great leaders of the republican party, and they have been commonly supported by the principal members of the great commercial towns, which may be compared, as to political weight, to



the monied interest among us\*. The great body of the nobility, the peasants and the clergy

\* The republican party, that is the party in opposition to the house of Orange, was originally called the *Spanish faction*, because, as Sir William Temple informs us, their principles were thought to lead them towards a compliance with the religion and government of Spain, both which the house of Orange endeavoured to make irreconcilable with those of the commonwealth. After the doctrines of *Arminius*, which tend equally to superstition and arbitrary power, had been propagated, they were called the *Arminian party*, and by this denomination they were known until the year 1650, when *Jacob de Wit*, and five other deputies to the States of Holland, were seized upon and imprisoned in the castle of *Louvestein* (the *Bastile* of the Dutch), by order of the Prince of Orange, for pursuing *Barneveldt's* practices. Upon this event the *Arminian party* took the name of the *Louvestein faction*, from the place of imprisonment of their leaders. This appellation they retained until the revocation of the *perpetual edict*, and then they were called the *French faction*. By this name they were known until after the death of our King William, when they assumed the title of the *republican party*. This name however was again laid aside, and they have for some years called themselves *patriots*, the *patriotic party*. But this appeared to me such an unjustifiable abuse of terms, that I determined to call them by their former appellation, the *republican party*.

clergy throughout the whole republic, many of the inferior cities, and most of the army and navy, have been ever attached to the cause, and have supported the interests of the Princes of Orange. Those of every description, who, through interest, prejudice, constitution or indifference, affected moderation and appeared neuter between the republicans and the partisans of the house of Orange, have been called the *whimsicals* or moderate party.

From the nature of man and the course of human affairs, it was impossible that this last party could ever of itself make any considerable figure in the state. So that of course the great struggles for power and emolument have been between the two first parties, and each of them in its turn has prevailed, as the characters of men, the circumstances of affairs and the conjunctures of the times were favourable or adverse to their characteristic principles.

Those by which the republican party was distinguished were in a great measure derived



rived from an oligarchical scheme of government. To oppose any supreme magistracy in a single person; to keep the nobility as much as possible from the great offices of the state; to depress the army; and to subdue the spirit of the yeomanry, have been always the stern maxims of the great leaders of the republicans.

Those of the partisans of the house of Orange were more popular and conciliating. They held the office of Stadtholder to be necessary to preserve the union and to support the dignity of the commonwealth, which without such a supreme magistrate seemed to them a kind of indescribable monster in politics; they considered a respectable standing army as necessary to secure the independence of the state; they thought it equitable, that the nobility, who by their birth and their possessions were so much interested in the public prosperity, should have a proportionable share in the public service, and in the honours and emoluments that attend it; and they judged it reasonable that  
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the lower order of the people should be effectually protected from the aristocratic insolence and oppression of municipal magistrates.—Their principles partook in some degree of the liberal spirit of the British constitution ; while those of the violent republicans seem to have been derived from the corrupt policy of the Punic commonwealth when in its most degenerate state.

A philosopher who would have nothing in view but the tranquillity and happiness of the Dutch, or a legislator who would wish to improve the constitution of their government, could not hesitate in making a choice between these two parties. For national happiness and public tranquillity depend on good and equitable government, and the beauty and spirit of good government and constitution consist in dividing the exercise of power into such channels as may prevent its gathering into a torrent that might bear down every thing before it. But this can be done effectually only where there is a supreme magistrate, whose power  
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may resist the excesses into which a senate may fall, and a supreme senate by whose authority the supreme magistrate is liable to be controlled.

Sentiments and opinions of this kind, however, though just most probably in themselves, have not been at all times uniformly prevalent among the people of the United Netherlands. For a period of somewhat more than two hundred years that has elapsed since the union of Utrecht, upwards of half a century the republican was the predominant party in the republic.

In the first age of the commonwealth, the people were obliged to make great efforts and to carry on long wars in defence of their very existence: by this state of things, the Princes of the house of Orange, who were the chief ministers at home, and the chief commanders abroad, acquired a great and decisive ascendancy in the administration of affairs. When the state had acquired some degree of stability, their influence was represented by artful, and believed by credulous

lous men, to be inconsistent with public freedom, and measures were proposed to oppose or to circumscribe it. The event however shewed, that their ascendancy was necessary in the state; men learned by experience, that government could not be well conducted without it; and *Barneveldt*, at the age of seventy-two, died on the scaffold with general approbation for impugning this opinion\*. In a later period, *John De Wit* lost his life in the same cause, and

\* *John van Olden Barneveldt*, commonly called *Barneveldt*, was chief of the Arminian party in the beginning of the last century, and Grand Pensionary of Holland. He was always one of the most violent against the house of Orange, and in consequence of his impolitic or patriotic opposition to the influence of that family, he lost his head in the court of the Hague at a very advanced age. It is an indelible blot on the character of Prince Maurice, that he should have come on purpose to his apartments in the court to feast his eyes with the execution of this old statesman; but he could never forgive the Grand Pensionary's promoting the truce with Spain, against the interests and the wishes of the prince; for the authority and influence of the supreme magistrate of the commonwealth being more efficient during a war, *Maurice*, who was then chief of  
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and his death was equally popular\*. From that event to the decease of king William, the authority of the Stadtholder was acknowledged by the whole state, and exercised by that magistrate with the general con-

the house of Orange, and at the same time Stadtholder, Admiral and Captain General, endeavoured to obstruct the treaty with Spain, which *Barneveldt*, and the party of which he was the head, endeavoured on the contrary to promote with all their influence. They proved successful; a truce was concluded on for twelve years; and the conduct of the faction, and the leader who brought it to a conclusion, was never forgotten by Prince Maurice, who let no opportunity of revenge escape him. His violence, and as some said the illegality of his proceedings, against this old minister, whom many considered as a man well deserving of his country, was at the time highly resented by numbers in the republic, and is still spoken of with indignation by the republicans. But whatever the merits of the cause may be, it is certain that the forms of the proceedings, and all the circumstances of the conviction, execution and death of *Barneveldt*, leave a stain in the character of Prince Maurice, otherwise one of the best and greatest men of his age.

\* *John De Wit*, Grand Pensionary of Holland, son of Jacob De Wit, first burgomaster of Dort, whom we have

concurrence of the people. After the death of that Prince the contests of contending factions again broke out, and were carried on

have already mentioned (page 8, note) to have been imprisoned, as a leader of the Arminians, in the castle of Louvestein, was one of the ablest ministers that ever directed the affairs of any country. He governed the Dutch republic for above twenty years with almost absolute power, but was at length together with his brother inhumanly massacred, positively and literally torn to pieces by the populace of the Hague in the year 1673. The circumstances of this horrid murder, as related by *Sir William Temple*, are these: The *Ruard Van Pullen*, eldest brother of *John De Wit*, had been accused of a design upon the Prince's life, and of endeavouring to bribe one of his Highness's domestics to engage in that attempt; but sufficient evidence not appearing against him to convict him fully, he was sentenced only to be banished, at which the people, who were generally possessed with an opinion of his guilt, expressed great dissatisfaction. The morning he was to come out of prison, *J. De Wit*, his brother, who was then Grand Pensionary, would needs go himself, against the opinion of his friends, to bring him out, and to conduct him with the more honour from the town. For this purpose, he went in his coach, drawn by a *set* of horses to the *court gate*, the common prison of the Hague: this not being usual with this minister made it the more noticed



on with little intermission, and with unparalleled animosity, until the year 1748, when the offices of stadtholder, admiral and

noticed by the people, who began to assemble tumultuously together, first on the *Viversberg*, the *Voorhout*, and other streets adjoining, and then about the court gate, where the prisoner was kept confined; some of the burgher companies, the militia of the Hague, who were upon guard, mingled among them, and began to rail aloud against the judgment of the court, the crime of one brother, and the insolence of the other, who came, as they asserted, to carry him off in triumph. In the midst of this heat and passion, raised among the populace by discourses of this kind, the two brothers came out; some of the mob seized them; at first treated them with ill language, but from words fell speedily to blows, upon which the *Grand Pensionary*, foreseeing how the tragedy would end, took his brother by the hand and was at the same moment knocked down with the butt-end of a musket; they were both presently laid dead upon the place (the *Viversberg*), then dragged round the whole town and through its principal streets by the fury of the people, and finally torn in pieces. *Voltaire* positively asserts, that the barbarity and rage of the populace was carried to such a pitch on this occasion, that some devoured the hearts of these unhappy men, and others portions of their flesh. If this fanciful writer was

and captain-general of the Union, that is, of the whole state and its dependencies, were conferred on the late Prince of Orange, and rendered hereditary in his family.

From this æra to the year 1776, the partisans of the house of Orange continued uninterruptedly the prevailing party in the commonwealth; their principles of government were adopted by the ruling powers of the state; their maxims of policy were received; their favourite measures were pur-

was not led to exaggerate by the sprightliness of his imagination (for gloomy and horrid as the circumstance is, he tells it in a sprightly and even a jocular manner), it must be allowed to be one of the most singular instances of savage barbarity in a civilized people and polite age, that occurs in history. It is almost needless to add, because it is so well known, that the *Grand Pensionary De Wit* was at the head of a party in opposition to the Prince of Orange, the same who reigned afterwards over us, King William the Third; and that the two brothers were too great to be come at by regular forms, and too subtle, perhaps also too innocent to be legally convicted of any crime against either the Prince or the state at large.

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fued ; their firmest friends were promoted, and the Prince Stadtholder enjoyed more real authority, and more extensive influence than any of our sovereigns exercised in the British empire since the Revolution.

But soon after the commencement of our war with the American colonies, an extraordinary alteration took place in the minds of a great part of the people of Holland, and the authority of the Stadtholder came to be questioned in points in which at former periods he was used to exercise it without opposition or control.

To occasion this change in the sentiments and opinions of men, various different though concurring causes contributed about this time ; and in order to explain them, it may be necessary to say somewhat of the part which foreign states took in former times in the internal affairs of the republic.

From the general state of Europe, and  
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the particular circumstances of the Dutch republic, it necessarily happened, that on its first aim at independence, it was most intimately connected with England and France, the two states at that time most interested and best able to protect or to support it. The common concern which they all had in opposing or reducing the overgrown power of the house of Austria, of which they had all in their turns experienced the ill consequences, was a firm bond of their union; and while Spain and the Emperor continued to menace, or were in a condition to injure them, the political connections of these three states were attentively preserved. But when Austrian pride had been humbled, and Austrian power subdued by the victories of *Gustavus Adolphus*, and the policy of *Cardinal Richelieu*, the cause of their close union ceased to operate, and each of them pursued separately distinct views and different interests. Those of France were directed to projects of ambition which her rising power suggested to her, and of which the execution seemed feasible after



the revolution which the decline of the house of Austria had produced in the political system of Europe: her enterprizes however soon excited the jealousies, and alarmed the fears of the neighbouring states, and she became in a few years equally odious and formidable.

The Dutch, who were the most immediately exposed to be affected by her operations, were among the first who became suspicious of her designs; and the partisans of the house of Orange, that is, the Orange party in Holland, were the **first** who proposed measures to oppose or to defeat them. Among these, the revival of the offices of stadtholder, admiral and captain-general; an augmentation of the army; a reform of military discipline, and foreign offensive and defensive alliances took the lead. But their advice was disregarded, and all their efforts rendered fruitless by the violent republicans, who of all the political evils that could possibly befall their country, considered the stadtholdership and the ascendancy of  
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the **house** of Orange in the state, as the most intolerable: even subjection to France, or at least a political dependence on the French monarch, was held by them to be a far less grievous calamity.

As religious zealots in a Christian sect are in general little impressed with those benevolent sentiments which Christianity inculcates; so the political zealots in contending factions are frequently more devoted to their party than to the interest of the state, and often prove the greatest enemies to their country.

When Louis the Fourteenth determined to execute those schemes of ambition which he had formed, of making the Rhine the barrier of his dominions on the side of Germany and the United Netherlands, from the city of Strasburg to the confluence of that river with the Maes, he applied himself particularly to the great leaders of the republican party, and by threats, promises, offers of support against their opponents,



and open bribery, he so operated on their fears, their hopes, their prejudices, but above all upon their avarice, the natural and predominant passion of their country, that his ministers acquired a decisive ascendancy in their councils and deliberations. This ascendancy was employed as circumstances arose, or as occasions required, either 1st. To engage the state to act offensively in conjunction with France; or 2dly. To remain neuter; or 3dly. When engaged in alliances with the enemies of that monarchy, to act but faintly in their favour; or 4thly. To depress the Orange party; or finally, to weaken the commonwealth by fomenting intestine dissensions in it, and by that means preventing their adopting any effectual measures by which the execution of his designs might be obstructed. The same line of policy, for the same purposes, has been since generally pursued by his successors; so that for near a century and an half the republican party in Holland have been, with but few interruptions, devoted to the French interest, and except in times of open hostility,

lity, they have been avowedly supported and patronized by the court of France.

While the violent republicans were thus intimately connected with the French, the partisans of the house of Orange, and some of the most sensible of the moderate party were no less firmly attached to England; and to this they were induced by many reasonable and powerful motives. There was a conformity of opinion in matters of religion between Englishmen and them; there was an analogy of sentiment on political topics between them; they had in some degree a common interest with Britons, arising from the circumstances and situations of both; there had been repeated alliances between the house of Orange and the royal family of England; frequent intermarriages had taken place between private individuals of both countries; numerous establishments of Englishmen had been fixed in different places in the United Netherlands, and several Dutch families had settled in England for the purposes of commerce or of manufacture,



and these settlements had contributed to confirm and to cement the connections that subsisted between the two nations: but what perhaps determined the Orange party to adhere to the interests of England as much as any of these circumstances, was, the consideration that their declared opponents, the republicans, had devoted themselves entirely to France, the ancient, natural and hereditary enemy of Britain.

These two parties have been at all times so decidedly devoted to the interests of the two great powers who took the most active parts in the internal affairs of the republic, that they frequently derived their denomination from them; the violent republicans being sometimes called the French faction, and the partisans of the house of Orange the English party.

And doubtless it may at first sight appear extraordinary that the avowed abettors of supreme magistracy in a single person, as the partisans of the house of Orange ever have

have been, should attach themselves to a people whose enthusiasm in the cause of freedom has been in all ages characteristic; while the champions of republican government devoted themselves to the arbitrary monarch of a submissive people, who little knew or esteemed the advantages of civil liberty: but this singularity is in a great measure a consequence of the unfortunate and uncommon constitution of the commonwealth, and in this we are to seek for the reasons by which it is to be accounted for.

The inhabitants of most free states whether ancient or modern, have generally had the privilege of choosing their own magistrates, and might change or turn out most of them at the end of a limited term, if by their conduct they rendered themselves disagreeable to their fellow-citizens: and even such magistrates as might have been chosen for life, might be made very uneasy and insignificant by the people, if they behaved in an insolent or oppressive manner, or were suspected of sacrificing the interests



terests or the liberties of their country to their own private views or advantages.

This control of the *governed* over the *governing* members of the state naturally produced a good correspondence between them; for it prevented any unreasonable or groundless jealousies from arising in the breasts of the one, and it obliged the others to behave not only in a just and equitable manner, but also with modesty and complaisance in the exercise of the powers with which they were entrusted.

But by the form of government established in the United Provinces, the magistrates of every denomination are entirely independent of their fellow-citizens, either as to their appointment to office, or as to their conduct in administration, or as to their continuance in power after being chosen. Each of the seven provinces is divided into a certain number of districts, or has a number of towns, every one of which has a vote in the assembly of the states of the province

vince in which it is situated; and as these towns or districts are all governed nearly alike, it will illustrate their systems of polity, to give a short account of the government of the city of Amsterdam, the most considerable city in the republic.

In Amsterdam, the chief legislative power is lodged in a senate or council of thirty-six persons; the executive authority is exercised by four *Burgomasters*, of whom three are chosen annually, and one remains in office two years: justice is administered and the higher police is managed by nine *Schæpnen*, *Echevins* or *Aldermen*, of whom seven are annually appointed, and two remain two years in office; so that the three political powers, the legislative, the executive, and the distributive, are lodged in forty-nine persons. Now of these, the *Burgomasters* are chosen, not by the citizens at large, but by the majority of the senate or council of thirty-six. Of this senate or council when once a man is chosen a member, he continues so for life,



life, or during good behaviour; and whenever a vacancy happens by the death or removal of one of these senators or members of council, a new one is chosen, not by the citizens, but by the majority of the senate or council of thirty-six. In this council or senate are also lodged the powers of deputation members to represent the city in the assembly of the States; of electing the *Schæpen* or *Aldermen*; of making laws; of imposing taxes, and of coining money: they have too the power of enforcing their ordinances by pains, punishments, penalties, fines and amerciaments. Then with regard to their officers, they appoint the *Pensionary* of the town, who answers to our *Recorder*; the *Haute Officiere*, whose office is somewhat of the nature of that of *Sheriff* among us, and they nominate the secretaries, the treasurers, and all the subordinate ministerial or judicial officers of the city.

Thus these forty-nine persons are, in the *first place*, the only judges of all suits or disputes that may arise between citizen and  
citizen,

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citizen, as well as of all crimes committed or said to have been committed within the city or the district belonging to it.

*Secondly*—They have the nomination of all officers belonging to the courts or the administration of justice.

*Thirdly*—They are conservators of the peace, and are consequently invested with all the powers which the different ministers of the various branches of police exercise in other countries.

*Fourthly*—They have the absolute disposal of the whole of the city revenue, and of all fines and amerciaments that are levied within their jurisdiction.

*Fifthly*—They have an absolute and uncontrollable power of assessing every inhabitant of the city at what rate they please towards the general taxes.

And *Sixthly*—They are the constituents of the representatives of the town in the assembly of the states of the province.



Such are the general outlines of the government of the city of Amsterdam, and with very little variation they are applicable to all the other cities and districts of the republic; so that it is evident that the citizens have nothing to do with the government of the state, nor even with the municipal administration of the affairs of their own towns; nor have either the magistrates or the deputies the least dependence upon them either for their acquisition of office, or their conduct in place, or their continuance in power: on the contrary, it is plain, that the government is a pure oligarchy, and in a great measure conducted on oligarchical principles, only perhaps occasionally tempered by the spirit of the people, or the influence of commerce, but to true constitutional freedom it can not certainly pretend. What is properly meant by public slavery does not consist in any particular *form* of government, but may be the attendant of that sort of constitution which from its external appearance may seem the most free; for slavery may be as absolutely established,  
and

and tyranny as harshly exercised under a republican form of government as under the despotism of a single person; and this often happens when the magistracy is invested with an uncontrollable power to reward those who blindly submit to their dictates, or to punish such as attempt to oppose their measures, because by means of this power, they make themselves masters of every check that can be contrived for restraining their authority and for preventing their making a tyrannical use of it.

Hence it comes to pass, that under an aristocracy or an oligarchy, the people may be as destitute of freedom as under the most absolute monarch, and the tyranny exercised may be as unrelenting and as cruel. Now this is nearly the case in Amsterdam and in the chief great trading towns in the United Provinces; the legislative, the executive, and the jurisdictional powers are all lodged in the members of one assembly; this assembly consists of but very few persons; these persons choose and promote each other; they pass  
what



what laws they please; they inflict what sentences they think proper; and they execute these laws and these sentences in what manner they judge expedient, without any check or control from men or assembly of men: nor have they the least dependence upon the citizens or yeomen for their election into that assembly, or for influencing their proceedings after they are there; from whence it may fairly be concluded, that a great part of the inhabitants of the United Netherlands are subject to as arbitrary a power as was ever established in any country in Europe. Now an intimate connection between the ministers of such a system of government and those of an unlimited monarchy must seem natural enough; and whoever considers the leading principles of the republican party in Holland, as well as the constitution of their great towns, will cease to be surprised at their predilection for the French interest.

But whatever benefits they may have expected, or whatever advantages they may have

have derived from their long union with France, it is certain, that until the year 1776, the republicans as a party were neither so popular, numerous, or respectable as the partisans of the house of Orange; though it may be, that they generally surpassed these in party policy and exceeded them in wealth, two circumstances certainly of great importance, and which in any state operate very powerfully in favour of those who may have the direction of them; and through a deficiency in at least one of which, it may be not unreasonably presumed the Orange party declined so rapidly in influence and power within these last ten years, as may be seen by considering the original texture, constitution and views of that body of men, as well as the line of conduct by which they and their great leaders were raised at first to authority in the republic.

The partisans of the house of Orange have generally consisted of seven different orders or descriptions of men: the nobility, who in the language of the Dutch chancery



are called the *Equestrian Order*; the army; the navy; the magistracy and inhabitants of the inferior towns; the yeomanry; the clergy, and the most rational or polished part of the moderate party or whimsicals.

All these several classes of men differed from each other in interest, in views, in character, in motives of action, in principles of conduct, and in political opinion. The only sentiments in which they seemed to agree, were, in an attachment to the house of Orange, and in a belief of the utility or necessity of the office of the Stadtholder for the good government of the state: but even these sentiments originated in them from very different causes.

*The Equestrian Order* were attached to the house of Orange, and wished to contribute to establish its power in the commonwealth, because, like the nobility in most other countries, they liked the splendour of a court, and the offices and distinctions which belong to the attendants of a prince; besides, they

they detested the four insolence of the republican leaders; and they hoped to have a considerable share in dispensing the power of the Stadtholder themselves, were his authority once firmly established in the state.

*The army* was well affected to the same cause, by the recollection of the renown acquired by them in the Low Countries for a long series of years under the conduct of the princes of that family, and by the common spirit of all armies, which is naturally to prefer the government and to unite under the authority of a single person.

*The navy*, through the hopes of a more equitable distribution of offices and preferment under a stadtholder and high admiral, than they could expect under the partial administration of the commissioners of the five admiralty boards, were of the same affections with the army.

*In the inferior towns*, the magistracy and inhabitants were influenced by present emoluments, by the hopes of future advantages



for their families or their dependants, and perhaps sometimes by bribery to devote themselves to the party of the house of Orange.

*The yeomanry or peasants* had an old and hereditary attachment to that family, which was increased by the aristocratic oppressions which they were sometimes obliged to suffer from the republican leaders.

*The clergy* of the established church extended their abhorrence of the heterodox opinions of *Arminius* to the persons of those who adopted them, and among these they reckoned several of the most distinguished of the republicans\*. This was sufficient to inflame their zeal against that whole party, and

\* *Arminius* was a professor of divinity in the university, and about the beginning of the seventeenth century propagated some strange doctrines from the theological chair of Leyden, on free grace, justification, election, and the like obscure and uninteresting topics. He particularly defended several propositions concerning predestination, of which his opinions were different from

and by a natural consequence to determine them to unite with the partisans of the family of Orange, whose interests they espoused and supported with that ardent enthusiasm which is peculiar to the zealots of a cause wherein religious controversy is combined with political contests.

*And*

from those entertained in general by other reformed churches, and which, of course, excited the fury and indignation of the orthodox pastors and professors. After his death, there was one *Francis Gomarus*, who possessing more than ordinary zeal for orthodoxical doctrine, attacked the *Arminian* propositions with great perseverance and success. This, as is usual in similar cases, inflamed the controversy; the heresy spread abroad; many of the citizens and some of the regencies became *Arminians*, but almost all the clergy sided with *Gomarus*, and became *Gomarists*. A great majority of the people followed the party of the clergy; and Prince Maurice, who was at that time chief of the house of Orange, declared himself a *Gomarist*, in opposition to the *Arminians*, who had been ever hostile to the interests of his family. By this means, theological disputes, religious controversy, party views, and political divisions, came to be combined together. The consequence was, that great tumults and disorders ensued in se-



*And as for the most rational or polite part of the whimsicals or moderate party, they were inclined to favour the interest and to support the cause of the house of Orange, from a persuasion that the measures and the maxims of the republicans were equally inconsistent with civil liberty and the prosperity of the state. Besides, they were dis-*

veral places; at *Leyden, Utrecht, Hoorn, Amsterdam, Alkmaer, Harderwyck, &c.* Prince Maurice, supported by the clergy and the people, took this opportunity of displacing such magistrates as he supposed were hostile to his own views, under pretext of their adhering to the *Arminians*. Many were seized and punished; among others, *Barneveldt* and *Hugo Grotius*: what became of the former has been already mentioned (see note, p. 14); and as for *Grotius*, he was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in the castle of *Louvestein*, out of which he afterwards made his escape by means of his wife, who shut him up in a chest in which she was allowed to convey books to him, and in that manner had him carried unseen out of the prison. The doctrines of *Arminius* were condemned as erroneous at the synod of Dort, in the year 1625: still however his followers are pretty numerous in the republic; they are sometimes called *Remonstrants*, and the *Gomarists*, in opposition to them, *Contra Remonstrants*.

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gusted with the cant, the arrogance, and the affectation of that party; and they considered the offices of stadtholder, admiral and captain-general, to be necessary to support the dignity of the state; to preserve the uniformity of the government; to restrain the abuses of subordinate officers; to superintend the internal administration, and to enforce military discipline.

To regulate the movements, to concert the measures, and to direct the operations of a body thus heterogeneously composed, so as to attain any great or difficult end, required talents, dexterity and address, an extensive knowledge of the characters of men, and great experience in political affairs. All these shining qualities the Princes of Orange possessed in a very high degree. Genius, valour, and ability seemed hereditary in their house; and perhaps all history does not present us with such an uninterrupted succession of great characters both in peace and in war, sprung from one family, as the house of Orange produced between



the middle of the sixteenth and the beginning of the present century.

By the wisdom of their policy and the popularity of their manners, these princes preserved the affections, acquired the confidence, and influenced the conduct of all these different descriptions of men, so far as to determine them all to co-operate in support of their interest, which they represented as a common cause. And the impulse, which they communicated to the minds of the people, was so permanent and so powerful, that above forty years after the death of the last of these heroes, its operation fixed the offices of stadtholder, admiral and captain-general in another branch of their family, and rendered them hereditary in it, not only in the male but even in the female line.

The people in every country are always extravagant in their affections, and their love and their hatred are equally boundless and violent. When this event happened, in the year 1748, the zeal of the Dutch  
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for the house of Orange was at the highest; all orders in the state concurred or seemed to concur in favour of its interests; even some of the republicans despairing of being able to resist the general torrent of popularity which ran for William IV. fell in and glided along with it for the present. And as the affections of a people so serious or so little volatile as the inhabitants of the United Netherlands, are neither apt immediately to subside, nor liable to the sudden transitions from one extreme to another, which have been sometimes observed among less phlegmatic characters, they continued attached to the person of that prince during his life, and to the government with a stadtholder during his administration. On his death, which happened in a few years after the new settlement was made, the Princess Royal of England, his widow, assumed the regency during the minority of her son William V. the present Prince of Orange. But she too dying before the young Stadtholder came of age, the care of his person, as well as the execution of his offices, was com-



committed to the *Duke Louis of Brunfwic*, in whose general adminiftration, particular meafures and perfonal character may be found one caufe, at leaft, of the prefent difcontents in the Dutch republic, as well as of the decline of the power of the Stadt-holder.

This duke is a younger fon of the houfe of *Wolfenbittel*, and is nearly allied to many of the moft powerful fovereigns of Europe, his two fifters having married with the kings of Denmark and Pruffia, the fon of his elder brother with a princefs royal of England, and his nephew the unfortunate emperor John, having for fome time of his infancy filled the throne of all the Ruffias. Thefe advantages however of high birth and illuftrious alliances are not in any degree fupported by thofe of perfon, appearance, or addrefs; for he was generally looked upon as the moft ungraceful and unwieldy man, even in Holland, where clumfiness and corpulency are not uncommon. His enunciation and addrefs are ftill more difagreeable

greeable than his figure, for besides an impediment in his speech which occasions an excessive stammering, the general style of his language and conversation is so ambiguous and confused, so full of perplexity and redundancy, that it is extremely difficult to comprehend clearly what his ideas are on any subject of which he happens to treat. But whatever defects there may be in his manners, or his language, or his person, are in a great measure compensated for by the endowments of his mind. With the countenance of an ox, he has the sagacity of a much more subtle animal. Industry, penetration, and a knowledge of mankind he certainly possesses, and he has in a high degree not only that boldness of heart which is called valour, but that coolness and strength of mind which produce resolution. He is a master of dissimulation, but, for a wise man, he affected it too much even in trifles, and by this affectation he sometimes defeated the most favourite political intrigues, in conducting of which he is said from his earliest youth to have extremely delighted.

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His sound sense, experience and understanding have been seldom questioned; though it is certain that in him these qualities have been hitherto rather speculative than successfully exercised, for he frequently failed in applying them to action; perhaps because his views were carried too far beyond his capacity, or his ends beyond the means he could employ to attain them. Candour, sincerity and munificence he was totally unacquainted with and perfectly contemned, but he was at the same time a great master of insinuation, and that in a manner peculiar to himself. By means of this single art, while he wanted every quality without exception that constitutes an accomplished courtier, or a fine gentleman, he acquired such an ascendancy over the Prince of Orange, that he governed him absolutely. He was not only the chief minister of the Stadtholder, but his friend, his companion, his favourite, his director. By this single talent of insinuation, he obtained the rank of field marshal of all the troops in the republic, and the chief command of all the forces; and

and he got the government of *Bois le Duc*, the regiment of Dutch guards, and a considerable pension. Though he served with some reputation, and had a command in the allied army, in the war which followed the death of the emperor Charles VI. through which he attained to a high rank, and a regiment in the Austrian service, his military talents were never highly rated, at least in Holland they were never considered proportionate to the offices which he held, or to the emoluments which he derived from them. The prevalence of this notion, together with his engrossing the favour of the Prince, could not fail of exciting the jealousy of many of the nobility, and of alienating their affections from the person and government of the Stadtholder. Another circumstance in his character that had considerable influence on his conduct, and which in a man of his good sense and experience was extraordinary, rendered him very unpopular with the army; this was his extreme partiality to his own countrymen, on whom he conferred whatever places



places of trust or profit happened to be at his disposal, in preference to the natives of the country, and commonly without any great regard to birth, services or ability; so that the army, the garrisons and executive offices, became in some time filled with German adventurers, who had little to recommend them besides their country and their obsequiousness \*. The obloquy which follows the arbitrary measures, or unpopular conduct of ministers, is always in part reflected by them on the prince, under whose authority they act, who, however extensive his talents, or however amiable his

\* The spirit of discontent, which so declared a partiality produced, at length rose so high, that once at a review of the regiment of guards, which the duke himself commanded, no less than seventeen balls were fired at him by some of the privates, who, incensed at the injustice with which they conceived that they and their fellow soldiers and their fellow citizens were treated by him, loaded their pieces with ball in order to destroy him, by which, though he escaped unhurt, some officers were killed, many were wounded, and among the rest the *Baron Pic van Zoelen*, a colonel in the army, a nobleman of Guelderland, and chamberlain to the Prince of Orange.

his personal qualities may be, never fails to share in the odium incurred by the political demeanor of his servants. This it was the fortune of the Stadtholder to experience, in consequence of the Duke of Brunswic's violent prejudices in favour of his countrymen. For though the attachment of the greatest part of the army to the house of Orange was too firm to be easily or suddenly shaken, yet the zeal of many in it for that cause was damped, their affection for the person of the Prince was cooled, and his interest in them was considerably impaired by the conduct which the field marshal held in governing and regulating the military affairs of the republic. Other orders of men either had real or conceived imaginary causes of discontent with his administration. The navy were dissatisfied with his prejudices in favour of the Germans, of which they too felt the effects. Several of the more sensible men of the moderate party were persuaded that he never had the solid and permanent interests of the commonwealth in view, and that his regard for the state did not extend beyond



beyond his own life or ministry. Many of the magistracy and inhabitants of the inferior towns conceived themselves to be ill treated by him, because they did not find in him that attention to their interests or recommendations which they were used, in former periods, to meet with at the court of the Stadtholder. And the clergy were disgusted with him because they found themselves totally neglected by him. Thus numbers were rendered hostile, or at best but indifferent to the interests of the Prince, who were in other times the most zealous and determined in his cause.

The rapid impulse given to the power of the Stadtholder by the impetuous order of the popular party in the year 1748, aided by contingent circumstances, and managed by the prudence and moderation of the new government, supported the authority of the house of Orange on a grand scale in the republic during the life of William IV. and the regency of the Princess Royal. This high scale, the Duke of Brunswic, a military  
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man, born and educated under an arbitrary sovereign, and passing the earlier part of his life in camps, or in the courts of despotic princes, where the unalienable rights of mankind are little known or regarded, took for the natural tone of the administration of the commonwealth. Through this fundamental mistake he adopted a system of politics which neither corresponded with the conjunctures of the times, nor suited the character of the people whose affairs he directed, nor the circumstances of their situation. In such a state of things it may be well supposed that neither his administration could be very agreeable, nor his measures very salutary, nor his person very popular. That they were not so we may now pronounce with a degree of certainty founded on experience. But that it was long before either he or the Prince he served perceived this, if ever they perceived it at all, may be equally asserted without any violation of truth. For though they could not but perceive that numbers were uneasy and dissatisfied, yet like most other princes and their ministers,



who have usually short methods on such occasions, they attributed the alteration in men's tempers wholly to the efforts of faction. The delusion of the one was too deeply laid and too systematically supported to be easily removed, and neither the prejudices, nor the habits, nor the manner of thinking of the other, could bear such representations, or make such researches as might tend to take it off.

On the whole, the Duke of Brunswic seems to have acted during his ministry in Holland, from a conviction that the interests of the republic and those of the Stadtholder were not only separate and distinct, but in some measure opposite and incompatible; so that by how much the more zealous he was for the Prince, the more reason of discontent or distrust was administered to those, who were attached to the state in general. Because though his maxims of government and his measures of policy tended to raise the authority of the Stadtholder beyond what his

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predecessors enjoyed, yet as these were considered as unconstitutional, his influence was looked upon as pernicious to the commonwealth, and tending to augment the authority of *one*, at the expence of the rights of *many*.

And though the Prince of Orange had probably no share himself in framing such maxims, or in concerting such measures, yet he might be the more easily persuaded that they were necessary and wise, by his conceiving them to be particularly advantageous to himself, as they were invariably represented by the flattery of his own courtiers, and the policy or the arts of the Duke's creatures, by whom he was constantly environed.

This may be presumed from the general character of this Prince, who without doubt possesses many excellent and amiable qualities. His disposition is in a high degree mild, courteous, affable, and humane; his manners are easy, agreeable and engaging; his intentions and his wishes for the prof-



perity of the people among whom he presides, are generous and patriotic; he has a great regard to justice in his conduct to them as individuals; and he entertains a high affection for the yeomanry of the United Provinces, as they indeed generally do for him. But at the same time, his penetration, his knowledge of men, and his talent in governing are narrow and confined. He neither extends his views far, nor perceives at once the chief objects within the scope of those he has, nor seems capable of high designs of any kind. The numerous and complicated relations, consequences and dependencies of political subjects of magnitude, he has neither industry to trace, nor genius to discern. Besides, he has an habitual irresolution, which proceeding more from want of strength of judgment or of mind, than from fertility of imagination, a faculty in him by no means quick, has proved a cause of many errors, and of consequent difficulties to him. His understanding does not reach above the middle standard, which frequently leads him to jealousies without cause,

cause, or to distrusts without foundation, and though in a great measure destitute of firmness, he is not without a considerable portion of obstinacy. These defects have from his youth obscured in him qualities which would otherwise have appeared to advantage, and would have shone most naturally in a benevolent, amiable, disinterested character like his. But it has been his misfortune that either through the consideration of political reasons, or the influence of those persons in whom he chiefly confided, he did not act so much according to his own nature in the conduct of public affairs, as he did in the transactions of his private life, and hence it came to pass that many incidents of his government have been very inconsistent with the general principles he professed, as well as with the general tenor of his character. This circumstance occasioned many suspicions of his sincerity and of his designs; and from these suspicions have arisen several of the disappointments he has met with, and of the mortifications to which he has been exposed since the dif-



sensions that now distract the Dutch republic have openly broken out.

Thus the consequences of his temper, and the measures or maxims of the Duke of Brunswic's administration, had a considerable share in producing a change in the dispositions and affections of men.

The republican party since the death of the Princess Regent had continually gained ground, not only through their own artful management, but through the impolitic measures of the Stadtholder and his ministers. The great leaders of them and their dependants did not fail to insinuate every day something to the disadvantage of the Orange party, and this they did with such application and success, that in some time it might be without great difficulty perceived, many had been brought over to their side, who had been before inimical to their principles and their designs.

As the dissatisfactions of the people and the defection of the partisans of the Prince increased,

increased, the jealousies among his ministers and in his family were inflamed. So early as the year 1769, it began to be known that his immediate friends were neither so well with him, nor so clearly connected with each other as usual, and that there was an open breach between his brother-in-law the *Prince of Nassau Weilburg* and his favourite the *Duke Louis of Brunswic*.

The republican emissaries did not fail to comment largely on these circumstances, and to draw conclusions from them by no means favourable to their opponents; and their reasonings or assertions were confirmed in some degree, or at least rendered plausible by the total secession of the *Prince of Weilburg* from the councils of the Stadtholder, and his departing with all his family from the Hague, which happened soon after. This prince was on his own merits deservedly popular among the Dutch, for he possesses in an eminent degree those qualities which they esteem most, coolness, valour, œconomy, justice, moderation, steady-



ness and sincerity: but his popularity was greatly heightened by their attachment to the Princess Caroline his consort, who was born among them, and whose open, generous, benevolent mind, and engaging manners, had won the affections of all orders of men. The zeal of the people for both was considerably increased by the persecution (for so it was called) which they suffered from their brother and his minister the Duke, and their leaving the court and abandoning the capital, in consequence of the ill treatment which it was said they received, reflected much odium on those who occasioned it. Nor were there wanting agents in Amsterdam, and others of the great commercial cities, who boldly asserted that the principles of the Stadtholder and his ministry were of so pernicious a tendency to the true interests of the state, that the *Prince of Nassau Weilburg*, who really loved the commonwealth, would not by his presence seem to sanction the measures which he saw they were determined to pursue, and that on this, as well as on several other

other accounts, he withdrew to his government of *Maestricht*, or his own territories in Germany.

Thus, to resume what has been said, we have seen that in the early age of the republic, the princes of the house of Orange, who were the chief magistrates in civil affairs, the chief commanders in war, and the chief ministers in politics of this people during the great efforts which they made, and the long hostilities in which they were engaged, possessed a great and decisive ascendancy in the government. After the state had acquired a certain degree of stability, the influence of that family began to be controlled by a republican party, which having preserved a superiority for some time, was depressed by the execution of *Barneveldt*. After this catastrophe, the house of Orange resumed its weight and authority in the commonwealth, and preserved both unimpaired to the death of the father of our William III. This king being a posthumous child, was not yet born when that event happened,



pened, so that a long minority ensued, during which the republicans again acquired superior influence in the state, and retained it to the *death of John de Wit*. We have seen that until the administration of this party, however they and the partisans of the family of Orange might have differed in matters of internal government, the dread of the overgrown power of the house of Austria rendered them both unanimous in their sentiments on the conduct that was to be held in foreign politics, so that both were equally and intimately connected with England and France. The victories of the king of Sweden, and the policy of the French minister, having impaired the strength and lowered the pretensions of the Austrian princes, the power of France became formidable in Europe, and the wiser and more dispassionate part of the people thought it unsafe to remain any longer connected with that monarchy, and conceived it necessary to oppose it. Among these were the most distinguished and considerable of the friends of the house of Orange. On this account  
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the whole party came to be looked upon with an evil eye by the French court, who of course made their addressees to the republicans. Hence it came to pass that the Orange party threw themselves entirely into the English, and the republican party into the French interests; so that both became completely divided, by this circumstance, in their sentiments on foreign as well as on domestic politics. We have seen that these two rival parties were confirmed in their attachment to the respective powers whose interests they favoured by various different motives; the Orange party to Englishmen, by a conformity of opinion in religious matters, an analogy of sentiment on political topics, and a common interest in defending both; by frequent alliances between the chiefs of each; by frequent intermarriages between individuals, and by reciprocal settlements made by them in each others countries. The republican party to France, by the natural coincidence between oligarchical and despotic principles of government, by the hopes of support against their opponents,

and



and by the avarice, the ambition, the jealousy, the resentment, and the corrupt policy of their leaders.

We have seen that the stern maxims of the republicans were not well adapted to the independent spirit of a free people, and that consequently their party was neither so numerous nor so popular as that of the house of Orange, whose principles were more mild, generous and conciliating. The heads of this party, by courting and flattering the nobles, by supporting the clergy against the Arminians, by protecting the yeomanry from aristocratic oppression, by bribing the magistracy, or by patronizing the inhabitants of the inferior towns, by cultivating the favourable dispositions of the army and navy, and by the general mildness, equity, good policy and moderation of their conduct and their measures, gained to their interest a considerable majority of the inhabitants of the United Provinces.

While they practised the political arts by which their superior influence was at first acquired,

acquired, they questionless held the administration of the commonwealth in their hands; but when their principles seemed to be altered, and their conduct to be changed, their interest declined, and they began to meet with frequent opposition or control in the exercise of authority.

We have seen that the conduct and measures of the Stadtholder, and his minister the Duke of Brunswic, alienated the affections of many from the Orange party. The equestrian order was incensed at a foreigner's engrossing the favour of the Prince, and possessing the most lucrative, important and honourable offices of the republic. The partiality of the favourite to his own countrymen, afforded matter of discontent to the army and navy. The magistracy and inhabitants of the inferior towns were offended at the neglect with which they were treated by him. The clergy resented his indifference for them. The moderate party were disgusted with the general tenor of his administration. And men, and  
women



women too, of all parties and descriptions were highly dissatisfied with the treatment which it was conceived, through him, the Prince and Princess of Nassau Weilburg received at the court of their brother, the Prince Stadtholder.

In this manner we have seen that an alteration was insensibly produced in people's minds; and before men were perfectly aware of the change that had taken place in the public affections and opinions, the party of the house of Orange was considerably weakened, and the interest of the Stadtholder had surprisingly declined.

## SECTION

## S E C T I O N II.

**A** Diversity of opinion upon almost every principle of politics had drawn a strong line of separation between the republicans and the partisans of the house of Orange. The consequences of this misfortune were extended and aggravated by unnecessary bitterness. A difference of sentiment on the administration of the commonwealth festered into a rancorous and incurable enmity. And in the moderate party that fervency of spirit was quenched, and that vigour was absolutely enervated, without which the best wishes for the public good must ever evaporate in empty speculation.

In the year 1776, soon after the contests between the British Colonies in America  
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and the mother country had come to an open rupture, the former of these parties had grown to considerable strength, and the second had greatly declined in zeal, in numbers, and in power. As hostilities continued between Great Britain and the Americans, the dissensions between them approached silently to a crisis, and the great leaders at Amsterdam had both penetration to perceive, and ability to avail themselves of it. But in the means employed by them to turn the conjunctures of the times to their advantage, they paid too little attention either to the true interests of the commonwealth, or to those rules of honour and delicacy which polished men endeavour, at least in appearance, to observe even in their grossest violations of morals.

But it has been well observed that no sentiments of mankind are more subject to delusion than those of patriotism. The most flagrant errors and unjustifiable designs conceal themselves under its veil. It sanctifies the most dangerous enterprises. It gives  
plausi-

plausibility to the most preposterous conclusions; and the best intentions are not sufficient to preserve men in this respect free from irregularity and reproach. Hence ambitious and designing heads of factions clothing their private ends, or personal resentments, in the fair colours of the public good, enter without scruple on the most pernicious counsels and actions through a specious care of the service of the state. Through the influence of this spirit, which is common to most party leaders, those in the great commercial cities in Holland seem to have acted at this time. They and their emissaries filled men's minds with the dangers arising from the measures pursued under the Duke of Brunswic's administration, and the government of the Stadtholder. They constantly laid before them the prospect of the advantages that would arise to the commercial as well as the political interests of the republic from a change of ministry. Pamphlets were daily published or encouraged by them, containing the most severe reflections on the Prince and his



friends. They endeavoured to prove that neither had any thing in view but their own private advantage, and that in a little time, if suffered to proceed unmolested in the execution of their designs, they would become too formidable to be controlled by the constitutional powers of the state. To these were added personal charges, the most groundless in themselves, but of the most infamous nature, and the trifling circumstances of a weak fondness for the pageantry of black servants, distinguished by the symmetry of their persons and the splendour of their habits, was commented on with that rancour and malevolence which the animosity of contending parties can alone inspire\*. Every hour brought forth its periodical calumny. Abuse took every shape that the genius or malice of the writers could give it. Anecdote, invective, raillery, misrepre-

\* An infamous libel written in French, but without date or name of place or publisher, entitled *le Procès des trois Rois*, which made its appearance in Holland about ten years ago, contains the most horrid insinuations against the Prince on this head.

sentation, satire and song, prose and verse were employed alternately. No method of vilifying the measures, the abilities, the intentions, or the persons of the friends of the house of Orange were omitted.

All these things had, in the course of time, some influence not only on the minds of the weak and the vulgar, but also on those of some men of superior rank, understanding, and fortune. But what weighed much more with persons of this description, and with some of all orders of those who seemed to have the true interests of their country really at heart, was the extraordinary attachment to the interests of Great Britain, and the consequent aversion to those of France, observable both in the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Brunswic; because, considering the general state of Europe, the respective circumstances of the two great monarchies, and the particular situation of the republic; such a declared prepossession in favour of the British, and so marked a prejudice against the French na-



tion, as seemed to prevail in the court and councils at the Hague, appeared inconsistent with the welfare of the commonwealth. Nor was this sentiment on the conduct of the Stadtholder and his minister, with regard to foreign politics, confined to the higher or better informed, or more factious or more profound classes of men; it became gradually popular, and was insensibly diffused through a great part of the inhabitants of the United Netherlands; so that they began in an early stage of the American war to discover their affections for the cause of the rising states, which had been always opposed, as far as they were able, by the Prince and his friends.

To this disposition in favour of the Americans, many of the Dutch were inclined by sentiments of sympathy as well as by motives of policy. The first are so much founded in nature, and proceeded in them from so obvious a source, that to dwell on them in this place would be needless and impertinent. Liberal-minded men are  
interested

interested in the cause of a free people whose rights are supposed to be invaded; their own feelings inform them to what point submission ought to be carried, and at what period it becomes baseness not to resist. All these considerations struck the Dutch the more forcibly, from the similarity of the circumstances of the revolted colonies to those in which the United Provinces were two centuries before.

But the political reasons by which a great majority of the subjects of the States General were induced to look with jealousy on Great Britain, and to favour the operations of the British colonists in their resistance to the measures of the parent state, being somewhat less obvious and more complex, may require some elucidation.

It has been already observed, that when the seven provinces of the Low Countries, which now form the Dutch republic, united to shake off the Spanish yoke, the power of the house of Austria was so formidable as



to threaten Europe with subjection. To support their pretensions, or to execute their designs, the princes of this family had at their command the treasures of the new world; the rich productions and manufactures of the East; the population of Germany; the inflexibility of Spain; the deep policy of the Italians; the adventurous spirit of the Portuguese; and the tried valour and discipline of experienced captains and veteran armies.

To resist the ambitious enterprises of princes possessed of such operative means, and such extensive resources, the counsels and the arms of several of the European states, whose independence was in danger, or whose fears were alarmed, were united: and they joined in support of what was considered and called *the common cause*. Of these states, England, France, and the Dutch commonwealth were the most powerful and the most active, and, as has been already said, they remained intimately connected, while the Austrian power, of which the dread was the

the original cause of their union, was held by them to be dangerous or formidable. When, by various measures of policy and events of war, the power which alarmed their fears and invaded their rights had been broken or reduced, the respective circumstances of these three states were altered; their close union ceased when the cause which occasioned it was removed; and they pursued new views when they found themselves in a new situation: those of France were directed to objects of ambition; those of the Dutch republic to commerce; and those of England to the establishment and security of civil and political freedom.

In the course of a little time the designs of Louis XIV. appeared as inconsistent with the tranquillity and general interests of Europe, as those of the house of Austria had been in former periods; and the suspicions which they raised produced a still closer alliance between Holland and our country. But French, like Austrian, grandeur experienced the vicissitudes from which



it is impossible for human exertions to exempt human affairs; and the same reign saw the decline as well as the rise of the ascendancy which France for a time enjoyed in the European system. From the conclusion of the peace of Utrecht, in the year 1713, to the commencement of the war of 1755, the balance of power seemed to have been so equally poised in Europe, that none of the great states which compose our political system appeared to preponderate so far as to be an object of serious jealousy or fear: only as nations as well as private individuals sometimes retain habitual prejudices of superior strength, consequence, and power, after the causes from which their superiority was derived have ceased to exist; the French were more inclined to disturb public peace, and the rest of mankind were more suspicious of her ministry, and more apprehensive of their designs, than the other European powers were of each other.

But even this sentiment, in both the French and other cabinets, lost much of its  
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influence on the conduct of statesmen, by three circumstances which, within the present century, have produced a remarkable revolution in the politics of Europe.

The first of these circumstances was, the improvement in the civilization of the Russian empire, which commenced under Peter the Great, and has since his reign continued under his successors. This mighty state, which in former ages had little weight or influence in the politics of either Europe or Asia, when its manners came to be refined, and its arts to be improved by a free intercourse with its polished neighbours, acquired such consequence by the extent, the population, and the productions of its territory, as enabled it to make a first-rate figure in the world, and inclined the northern potentates to consider it as a counterbalance, at least in that part of the globe, to the power of France.

The second was the rapid and surprising growth of the Prussian monarchy, which,  
through



through the wise policy and prudent management of two successive kings, and the extraordinary genius, extensive views, just measures, and heroic qualities of the last sovereign, rose from the obscurity of a subordinate state to be treated and considered among the most splendid and the most powerful kingdoms in Europe.

The third was, the great accession of wealth and power made to the British empire by the combined operations of policy and war; by commerce; by colonization, and by conquest. Each of these circumstances operated on the minds and influenced the politics of the Dutch; but the last affected both in a much higher degree than the combined consequences of all the others could have done.

Though in all ages of the world the enterprises and exercise of commerce have contributed in a much greater degree than either the precepts of philosophers or the dogmas of theologists, to enlarge the minds,  
to

to humanize the manners, and to improve the social affections of men; yet it is very certain, that there enters into the very spirit and nature of trade, a principle of exclusion and jealousy which seems incompatible with that liberality of conduct and of sentiment, by which those nations, as well as individuals, who have been considered as *generous*, have been usually characterised.

There is in general in this country no disrespect for the national character of the Dutch: on the contrary, those among us of sense and reflection esteem that people for a thousand good qualities which they doubtless possess: but all dispassionate men, in this as well as in every other country, must certainly confess, that there never existed on the face of the earth, so far as our knowledge of history has reached, any people that carried commercial jealousy and this principle of exclusion to such unwarrantable and extravagant lengths as the subjects of the States General of the United Netherlands. This might have proceeded, not only from  
3 their



their natural disposition, but also in some measure it may have been a consequence of their political circumstances and their local situation. The exertions which they made in asserting their independence were attended with a great expence of treasure as well as of blood; and taxation was in consequence of it carried among them in the beginning of the 17th century to a height then unknown in the other states of Europe. As their country did not possess the subterraneous wealth of mines, they could find only in their industry resources to enable them to pay or to bear such heavy imposts; and their soil not producing materials for manufacture, the operations of their industry were necessarily turned to fisheries and the carrying trade, which were originally the two principal objects of their commerce, and the two chief sources of their wealth.

For the successful conduct of these two great branches of trade the situation of their territory was extremely well adapted: its  
vicinity

vicinity to those parts of the ocean which have been most famed for harbouring or producing those kinds of fish which have been found to answer commercial purposes best, facilitated their enterprizes with regard to the first of these objects; and with regard to the second, they enjoyed still superior advantages of locality: their country was watered by the *Rhine*, the *Maeſe*, and the *Scheld*, three mighty rivers, which, together with ſeveral ſubordinate ſtreams that fall into them, taking their courſe through ſome of the moſt fertile European provinces, brought to them by an eaſy, cheap, and commodious conveyance, the various productions of France, Germany, Swiſſerland, and the Auſtrian Netherlands; and they carried back in return, the manufactures of Britain, the ſpices of the Eaſt, the various produce of the Weſt Indies and America, the minerals of Sweden, the ſtores of Ruſſia, the corn of Poland, and the wines, and ſpirits, and fruits of the ſouthern kingdoms of Europe.

From



From every progressive step in this extensive circulation a certain profit arose, which might be considered as a tax levied by the industry and skill of the Dutch on the ignorance and supineness of other nations: while their neighbours, through want of funds, or lack of spirit, or deficiency in knowledge; through the consequences of tyranny, or the influence of superstition, laboured under the numberless and complex disadvantages inseparable from such a state, the mass of these accumulated profits was immense, and the commerce, and wealth, and power of the Dutch commonwealth were at the highest.

Thus, the causes of its prosperity were intimately connected with its foreign relations, and in a great measure dependent on the low condition of the other European states; and hence the government of that republic ever looked with a jealous eye on any measures taken by the neighbouring sovereigns to improve the internal regulations,

tions, or to extend the foreign commerce of their dominions.

Though the theory of commerce be simple enough in itself, yet it embraces such a number of great and complex objects, that its true principles did not come to be well known or truly understood until many experiments had been made, and until long periods of time had elapsed.

After the decline of the Roman empire, the sciences and the arts shared in the fate of the people by whom they were extended over this western world, and all rudiments of them seemed to have been extirpated by the devastations of the northern barbarians, who then had subdued and over-run Europe. These fierce and uncouth conquerors, whose wants and possessions were equally scanty and limited, contemned as ignoble all occupations except those of war and the chase; and they neither practised nor knew the arts by which the great objects of commerce are multiplied or produced. When  
they



they had been some ages settled in the fertile countries which they had gained by their valour, the governments established by them acquired stability; their civilization was improved; they began to relish the social enjoyments of polished life; and as they advanced in refinement they learned to esteem and to cultivate the arts, which contribute to extend the views, the knowledge, the power, the pleasures and the empire of man. Among these, doubtless, such as serve as the basis of commerce may be considered as the most efficient, and on the revival of science and of letters they came to be the most valued. The Hanseatic league, the free states of Italy, and the sovereigns of Portugal encouraged and protected them; and by a successful cultivation of them they acquired a degree of wealth, and power, and weight, and consequence, which states far superior in population, in extent of dominion, in fertility of soil, in situation of territory, and in every other local advantage, could never attain.

But

But even *they* knew the importance and felt the beneficial effects of commercial arts and enterprises much better than they understood the true but simple principles of commerce. This great part of political knowledge was first discovered and improved by the Dutch, who for a long time exclusively enjoyed all the advantages derived from it; but the glory of having carried it to perfection is to be justly ascribed to Englishmen. Still even in our own free country a long series of years had elapsed before we began rightly to understand the true principles of trade. For though the navigation act, the great palladium of our commerce, was first made a law under the administration of Cromwell, it is certain that at that time neither the true nature of that measure was rightly comprehended, nor the full extent of the consequences which it afterwards produced were foreseen. So little were men acquainted then with what now appear the most obvious elements of commerce, that even the produce of our fisheries was charged with a heavy duty on



exportation, from which it was not freed until the twelfth year of the reign of Charles II. Until after the revolution all our native produce and manufactures, in short every article but fish, paid a considerable duty when exported; the most useful materials for the most important manufactures were not less heavily taxed on importation: and from the revolution to the accession of the late king, it was but by slow degrees, and at different and distant intervals, that the British legislature came into the great commercial system which has been since carried by it to such a length as it had, a few years ago, arrived at. Our legislators laid down two indisputable maxims, which served as the basis of all the leading measures adopted by them in regard to trade. First, that all our own manufactures should be *exported*, and all materials of our manufactures should be *imported*, under the lowest possible duty; and secondly, that agriculture should be encouraged as much as possible by freedom and by bounties. Pursuant to these maxims, by an act of parliament passed in the first year

year of the reign of William and Mary, the free exportation of corn, and the bounty thereon were granted; and in the session of the third and fourth years of the same reign, the first steps were taken towards freeing from all duties the exportation of our own wrought commodities, or the importation of those foreign materials that are most useful or necessary for our manufactures. For the encouragement of breeding and feeding of cattle,—beef, pork, butter, candles and cheese, were, by an act of parliament then passed, freed from all customs and impositions upon being exported.

In the session of the eleventh and twelfth years of king William, another act of parliament was passed whereby all our woollen manufactures, and all sorts of corn and grain, together with bread, biscuit, and meal were declared to be free from any duty upon exportation. And by a law enacted early in the reign of George I. all goods and merchandises of the product or manufacture of Great Britain, except such as



were therein particularly and exprefsly excepted, were declared to be free from paying any fubfidy or other duty whatfoever upon exportation. And as all the goods and articles therein excepted, were either materials for manufactures, or fuch as were proper or neceffary for carrying on manufactures, fo by the fame act almoft all foreign materials ufed for dying were made free from paying any duty upon importation, and the fubfidy of poundage upon re-exportation, was reduced to fixpence upon every twenty fhillings value, according to the rates then fettled. In this manner the true principles of commerce came to be gradually adopted by us, and to be fyftematically applied to the various operations of trade. But every ftep that was taken in this progrefs excited the jealousies and alarmed the apprehenfions of the Dutch, who neglected no meafures by which the exertions we made might be defeated or croffed.

Britons however enjoying fuch fuperior advantages of every kind, in climate, fituation,

tion, soil, constitution and produce; in native resources, internal wealth, political strength, and national character, extended their trade in America and the East, as well as in Europe, notwithstanding all the opposition they met with. Occasionally supporting their commercial enterprizes by arms as well as by policy; by the renown of their military exploits, as well as by the reputation or the wisdom of their counsels, they carried them to a height unattained before by any people, either ancient or modern. And they erected on them such a splendid edifice of fame, and grandeur and power as is unparalleled in the annals of the world. They exhibited an object wholly new and singular to mankind; and it grew up to such magnitude and importance, as equally astonished speculative philosophers and practical politicians. In the war which began in the year 1755, they were, in consequence of colonial and commercial relations, engaged against the most populous, warlike, extensive, opulent, and mighty states of the earth. Assisted by only a German elector they resisted the em-



pire and the combined power of the house of Austria, France, Spain, Russia, Sweden, and the most potent princes of Indostan. They not only resisted them, but by the vastness, the wisdom, the vigour, the success of their measures and their enterprises, they gained so decisive a superiority over these combined enemies, that on the conclusion of the peace of Paris, in the year 1763, the British empire was generally considered as the leading power in the European system, and at the same time it possessed a governing influence on the continents of India and America. Such great matters are arms, liberty and commerce, properly combined and mutually tempering or supporting each other, capable of performing.

All the maritime powers beheld with jealousy and surprise a superiority so imposing and so decisive; and these sentiments were aggravated, and gradually extended to indignation and resentment in many of the European states, not only by the general style of the British administration, which  
was

was on some occasions more haughty and imperious, and perhaps less prudent, than became the ministers of a wise and polished people, but also by the idle declamation of some frothy orators in the senate. For though at home, where people were acquainted with the characters of these men, their vague assertions or romantic ideas were little attended to; yet it is certain that abroad, from the high character generally attributed to the members of the British parliament, their declarations made a deep impression; and it was soon perceived that several of the courts of Europe entertained prejudices and resentments, with respect to the several interests and measures of the British empire.

For some time these unfavourable sentiments seemed to be studiously concealed in the breasts of a few great men, but it might be discerned without difficulty, not only that they existed, but that they only wanted a fit occasion to discover themselves in action, and these occasions were in the



course of the present reign frequently enough offered by the instability of some administrations, and the weak measures or fluctuating counsels of others.

Of all those who through motives of interest, or sentiments of animosity, wished to weaken the power of Britain, none had inclination to seize on the occasions that occurred, or ability to avail themselves of them, or means to turn them to the advantage of their own country, equal to the ministers of the French cabinet. Ever since the death of Louis XV. the court of Versailles had been industriously employed in preparing for a maritime war, and in finding out proper opportunities to break, or to invalidate the treaty of Paris. Her measures, as well secret as avowed, were uniformly directed to these ends, and the present king had been scarce seated on the French throne, when some of those ambitious projects were renewed, which Louis XIV. would perhaps have executed, had he not been opposed in the beginning of  
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the present century by the confederated powers of the *grand alliance*. In accomplishing these schemes of ambition, the court of France found as obstacles in her way, first, the strength and resources and spirit of Great Britain; secondly, a powerful party in the Dutch republic, headed by the Stadtholder, whom various motives determined to consider her enterprises inimical; and thirdly, the great German potentates, whose diversions on the side of the empire might overturn her best concerted measures. All these opposed impediments to her designs which it became necessary successively to remove or to destroy, and her ministers judged it expedient to begin with those arising from the circumstances of the British empire, because from the unhappy dissensions that existed between the presiding country and its dependencies, they might, under colour of asserting the rights of mankind and the laws of nations, both of which they pretended were violated by Great Britain, attack it without alarming the fears, or raising the suspicions of the other



other European powers. For this purpose a treaty was concluded at Paris, in an early stage of the American war, between the French King and the Continental Congress, and a plan was at the same time entered into, to embroil our court with the Spanish monarchy and the Dutch commonwealth. The decisive influence which France has for more than half a century possessed in the counsels of Spain, removed any difficulties that might have otherwise occurred in the execution of the first part of this plan; and the success of the other was considerably facilitated by the rising strength of the republicans, the increasing weakness of the Orange party, and the sentiments of jealousy, resentment and fear, with which many men of all the orders of the state were inspired by the grandeur, the conduct and the power of Britain.

In this manner, as the power, the conduct and the ambition of the house of Austria, towards the conclusion of the sixteenth century, occasioned the union between the  
arms

arms and the counsels of the Dutch commonwealth and those of France; so the power, the conduct and the ambition of the house of Bourbon, and the sentiments which they inspired towards the conclusion of the seventeenth century, produced an intimate union between the Dutch republic and the British empire. And towards the conclusion of the eighteenth century, the same sentiments, arising from the same causes of power, conduct and ambition in Great Britain, alienated the affections of numbers of the Dutch from the interests and relations of Englishmen, and rendered their minds the more susceptible of the impressions of French insinuations, and of French emissaries, when the court of France undertook to destroy their British connections. Such were the prevailing sentiments in most of the great trading towns of the United Provinces. But the Stadtholder or his ministers attended little to the inclinations of the people; the jealousies and discontents of the nation increased daily; the measures taken to allay them were injudicious and  
preci-



precipitate; instead of removing they inflamed the distemper; the evil extended gradually; silence concealed its progress; and this fatal progress was not perceived until the moment when the Prince, who might apply the remedy to it, was himself affected by the infection which he wanted power to repel.

Thus, to recapitulate the sum of what has been related, we have said, that various circumstances of internal government and domestic administration had contributed to weaken the Orange party, and to add to the numbers and strength of the republicans. By the operation of these circumstances, the two great factions came in the year 1778 to be nearly equal and balanced. In consequence of this equality matters came to a crisis between them, and the event of this crisis was accelerated by the hostilities in which Great Britain was engaged, and the consequences that followed them.

We have shewn that multitudes in the commonwealth were favourable to the enemies

mies or hostile to the interests of the British empire through different though concurring motives: some were inclined to favour the cause of the United States of America through sentiments of sympathy or compassion; others favoured France through motives of private interest and personal or party considerations. A few among the most violent considered any connection with England to be inconsistent with the prosperity of the republic; and many wished to lower the power of Britain:

First, through a principle of policy, thinking its maritime dominion incompatible with the freedom of navigation and the general interests of Europe.

Secondly, through the jealousy which successes in commerce, in war, and in extending the empire in the East and in the West Indies had excited.

Thirdly, through the resentment which some ill treatment to individuals had provoked.

Fourthly,



Fourthly, because through the amazing rise of Russian and Prussian power, Austria and France, through an alternate dread of whom the republic was for near two centuries connected with England, were no longer supposed to be formidable.

Fifthly, through the impressions of French emissaries, French insinuations, French policy, and gold.

We have shewn, that all these men, influenced by all these motives, were hostilely disposed with regard to Great Britain; and they insensibly extended these sentiments to the Prince and those who with him appeared attached to the British interest. Their dissatisfactions, their jealousies, their suspicions were various and endless; the measures of the Stadtholder and the conduct of the Duke of Brunswic were not well calculated to remove them; and the whole combined together produced such a mass of discontent, resentment, and even fury, as is not often seen in the Dutch commonwealth.

## SECTION III.

**T**HIS temper of mind in the inhabitants of the United Provinces, arising from some circumstances of the domestic government and external relations of the state, was still farther inflamed, and became of course more difficult to be allayed, by the situation of affairs in the republic at that period with regard to trade, manufactures, resources, finances and political strength in general.

And doubtless the political state of the Dutch commonwealth, on the opening of the year 1778, was much worse than even those who were best acquainted with its affairs had ever imagined; for the two great rival and contending factions had not yet come to an open rupture so as to reveal the source of weak-



weakness which their contests must necessarily produce; nor had the exigencies of the state as yet appeared so pressing as to make a discovery of its debility, with the deficiency of its means, its powers, and its resources.

But events have since convinced us, that even then the citizens were fullen and discontented; the councils of the States General weak, fluctuating and inefficient; the barrier mouldering in decay; the navy rotting in harbours; the arsenals empty, and the dockyards neglected. We know now by experience, that there was at that time neither union among the people, nor public spirit in individuals, nor vigour, nor temper, nor industry, nor judgment, nor a manly comprehension of public interest in the government. We know that of all those various objects and qualities which constitute national strength, or support national honour, or procure national respect, the only one the Dutch then possessed was money. But sentiments of avarice

rice and principles of commerce, founded on the narrow ideas of private interest, had taken such complete possession of their minds, that all objects of public glory, security, and renown, seemed to them illusory and vain, and not worth acquiring at the expence of treasure, of which it was not without difficulty and murmuring that they contributed any considerable sums even for the most necessary public services: so that from the possession of money, which has been so emphatically termed, and which has so repeatedly proved, the *sinews of strength in political bodies*, this people derived at that time or since but few of the many solid and permanent advantages that other nations have in all ages received from it.

It is an observation founded in wisdom, and justified by experience, that the more men indulge their predominant vices or gratify their private passions, the less concern they have for the honour of their country, and the less interest they take in the prosperity of the public. The justness



of this remark the effects of avarice at this time evinced among the Dutch; it absolutely emasculated their characters, and rendered them regardless of every honourable consideration but what related to the gratification of its incessant and insatiable demands: through its operation the fund for the marine was reduced to the produce of the small duties upon exports and imports; which duties were not half collected, by the connivance of the magistrates themselves, who were interested in smuggling and accustomed to practise it; so that the republic had hardly any naval force at all, and seemed to have no other title but courtesy to the name of a maritime power. Through the influence of the same principle their national debt remained during a long peace undiminished, though it was so considerable in the year 1776 as to have amounted to eighty-seven millions sterling. Many branches of their foreign trade declined daily through the operation of the same cause: their woollen and silk manufactures were not very considerable either in quantity,

tity, quality, or exportation; and from what appears by John de Wit's Memoirs of Holland, when he was grand pensionary, the decrease of their fisheries was prodigious; nor was that of their carrying trade less; they did not, at the period now spoken of, get one quarter of what they used to get by freight when they were the general sea carriers of all Europe: so that their *police*, which is still what it always has been, *excellent*, was the only remains of that prudence, vigilance, and good discipline, which made them formerly courted, respected, and esteemed.

But bad as the state of the affairs of the republic was at home, that of its foreign dependencies in Asia, Africa, and America, was incomparably worse. The Great India Company, which, on the subversion of the splendid edifice of commercial power raised by the Portuguese under the conduct of *Albuquerque*, had acquired the supreme direction of the trade and maritime connections of the East, and had for the greater



part of two centuries ruled lords paramount over the richest and most fruitful countries of that fertile region of the world, were so far declined in wealth and credit, the two great fountains of their empire and influence, as to verge on bankruptcy: their most important settlements were destitute of all those means of defence which art and numbers afford for the protection of places against hostile attacks: even Batavia, the magnificent seat of their oriental government, and the great emporium of their commerce, had neither fortifications nor a garrison, nor military stores, nor a naval armament to defeat any spirited enterprise that might be undertaken against it by a skilful, vigilant, and disciplined enemy. Their settlement at the *Cape of Good Hope* was in a still worse condition, and it appeared so desperate to *M. de Prehn*, a German officer of spirit and skill, who had a high rank in their service, and commanded their forces in that colony, that after having made fruitless representations to the Directors and Governor-general, of the weakness  
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of the place, and the wretched state of the garrison under him, he resigned his command, and a few years ago retired to his own country from so disagreeable a service. The situation of their factories and other subordinate settlements was equally weak and defenceless; so that the affairs of the Oriental Company at home and abroad were equally desperate and unpromising.

Those of the West-India Company were not in a more flourishing or more prosperous condition. The objects of civil and political administration in their settlements in the new world were conducted on such principles of violence, injustice, and rapacity, as were never before adopted by any polished people in a refined age; no, nor even by those uncivilized nations who are sometimes by men of less simplicity of manners denominated *barbarians*, though they have been seldom found so void of spirit and generosity as the Dutch settled in America. In these colonists, all the sentiments of honour, all the principles of jus-



tice, and all the feelings of humanity, seem to have been destroyed by the combined influence of avarice, trade, and luxury: of a base avarice derived from character; of an illiberal trade founded on fraud; and of brutal luxury, the necessary consequence of depraved appetites and corrupt passions in degenerate souls.

It is not in the nature of human affairs that any society, composed of men of such a description, and governed by such a system, should be otherwise than in a state of weakness and decline: for the weakness and decline, as well as the strength and prosperity of any society, are intimately connected, as causes and effects, with the general character of its members, and the prevailing spirit of its constitution; where these are masculine, vigorous, humane, equitable and free, we may conclude it to be flourishing and firm; but where these qualities are entirely wanting, we are justified by experience in pronouncing it the reverse; so that the political debility of the Dutch West-

India.



India Company, being a natural consequence of an obvious cause, may be readily conceived, and being easily accounted for it ceases to surprise. But what is really difficult to imagine is, that any government administered by Europeans in the eighteenth century should act with so little attention or regard to all that men have ever held most sacred and respectable, as the *regencies* of the Dutch settlements did in the West: for in the exercise of power, men of sense, however abandoned they may be in private life, endeavour in their public characters to preserve at least the semblance of the virtues or talents which they want; because they are sensible, that all power being ultimately founded on opinion, much of the reverence and respect paid to their persons and their office is derived from the belief people entertain of their possessing those superior qualities: and justly perceiving, that authority depends as much upon idea as upon duty, they avoid, as far as possible, to do any thing that may tend to lessen their reputation with the public. Hence they af-



fect to comply with received opinions; to attend to right reason; to respect moral principles; to maintain public justice; to understand the true spirit of legislation, and to observe certain rules of honour, and certain forms of decorum in their general conduct. But in open defiance of all these, with undeviating uniformity, in public and in private, at home and abroad, in peace and in war, the Dutch West Indians of all orders acted: reason, benevolence, morality, justice, equitable legislation, honour, and decorum, were all equally disregarded by them.

To enter into a detail of their particular measures or their leading principles would be uninteresting, but the general tenor of their manners and their government shall be exemplified by the conduct of one among them of considerable rank and office, whose character or practices were never considered singular by his countrymen.

There was a person of the name of *Graaff*, of low education and mean birth, but

but whose virtues and talents were still inferior to either his family or his knowledge. By avarice and fraud this man raised a fortune in the West Indies, and through the combined influence of money and cunning artfully employed (without question of his merits), he was some years ago appointed governor of the island of St. Eustatia. The woman to whom he was married was such as in every respect suited him: her character and manners, her birth and accomplishments, her figure and capacity were all beneath the common standard, even in her own country, where those engaging qualities and pleasing acquirements, by which the women of some other nations are happily distinguished, can be seldom met with: for in the Dutch settlements in the West Indies, female wit, delicacy, elegance, beauty or refinement, have never yet been sought for, or if sought for, not found. But however this may be, it is most certain that the wife of *Graaff* possessed none of these engaging characteristics; and it is equally certain, that in love of money, and  
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in arts to acquire it, few, either men or women, in any country equalled her. Nor was she in her usurious transactions or other avaricious pursuits, ever restrained by the sentiments of shame, which have been found to check the enormities of other persons, after every serious consideration that law, honour, and religion have suggested, to confine human depravity within certain limits, had been neglected or contemned. This woman possessing considerable influence over her husband, shared with him in the administration of the country of which the government was committed to him; and both being equally eager in amassing wealth, and equally regardless of the means by which it was acquired, prostituted the extensive powers with which the Governors of European colonies in the West Indies are usually invested, on every occasion for money. All the arts that avarice can suggest, or fraud practise, or authority employ, or industry exercise, were used by them to increase their fortune: bribery, extortion, smuggling, peculation, partiality in  
admi-

administering the political and regulating the commercial affairs of the island, the most barefaced corruption in the administration of justice, were all openly practised by them. But still all the extensive and diversified means which these numerous resources offered appeared insufficient to satisfy all the unlimited demands of their insatiable passion for wealth, and the ingenuity of the woman suggested a new scheme to raise money: this scheme, equally base, ridiculous, and novel, was to traffic in *ferrets*, and in those domestic animals called *cats*.

Posterity will scarce believe, that the palace of a governor of a flourishing European colony should have been converted, in the present century, into a mart for the sale of that vile race of quadrupeds, of which, whoever expected either favour or justice of *M. Graaff* must purchase numbers at the most exorbitant prices. We read in history, with just indignation, of baseness incomparably less monstrous than this, of which the proximity in point of time alone diminishes our  
asto-



astonishment: for it is certain, that the examples of virtue, of folly, and of vice, exhibited to us by the historians of antiquity, affect us much more sensibly than those of our own times; we are insensibly led on to behold without surprise what we familiarly see; and a deposed sovereign of Syracuse, becoming, through necessity, a pedagogue at Corinth five and twenty centuries ago, astonishes us more than a Dutch governor's turning vermin killer, through avarice, at Statia in the year 1778.

Thus, *virtue*, the main spring in a commonwealth, no longer subsisted among the Dutch: the public was poor; the great riches of individuals destroyed the equality necessary to a free state; their avarice, still greater than their wealth, extinguished public spirit, its necessary principle; their trade was decreasing, their manufactures diminished; their navigation on the decline; their public finances in ruin, and their fisheries expiring: and their navy, their barrier, their military strength, their foreign settle-

settlements, their great commercial companies, their government, their administration, their consequence, their whole republic, were in the last stage of degradation, debasement and decay.

In these circumstances of the affairs of the commonwealth, there were, of all the possible combinations that can be regularly formed of political principles and measures, but three systems that could be adopted, and between these, the government of the republic was necessarily to make their option, when the tranquillity of Europe came to be exposed to interruption in consequence of the troubles in America.

The first of these was a system of deep and sound policy, founded on a principle of vigour, and the measures deduced from it tended directly to the objects it proposed, which were to restore maritime affairs to their ancient flourishing state; to remove the abuses of the several departments of the internal administration; to restrain the enormities of the *regencies* in the foreign settlements;



ments; to support the credit of the great trading companies; to keep a respectable military establishment on foot, and to maintain national honour firmly abroad.

The second was a system of palliatives and temporary expedients, which, though generally raised on the delusive principles of political empiricism, and tending covertly to numerous and complex ends, of which many are in a great measure incompatible, and some in direct opposition with each other, we have seen sometimes adopted by the modern governments of Europe.

The third was a system of moderation and œconomy, of commerce and reform, founded on such circumstances of the situation of the commonwealth as the ruling powers of the state thought it proper to divulge or to avow.

Neither the spirit of the people, nor the maxims of government to which they had been accustomed, nor perhaps the particular character and private views of the ministers

sters of the republic, would allow them to conduct the administration on those principles of vigour which were to serve as the basis of the first of these systems.

To the second they might have been sufficiently inclined from their prevailing character, of which, for this last century at least, indecision has been the most striking trait. But there are certain conjunctures of seasons and of circumstances wherein wavering and irresolution are attended with probable risque or visible danger, and this period did not seem to be one of those at which procrastination, which has often assumed the appearance and produced some of the effects of wisdom or of policy, could be employed with success: so that the ruling powers in the United Provinces determined on adopting the last system for the administration of the government of the commonwealth.

From what has been said above on this system, it appears that it consisted of five great parts;—1st. Moderation.—2d. Economy.—



nomy.—3d. Commerce.—4th. Reform.—  
And 5th. which was the chief of all, the  
policy of avowing or exposing some part of  
the unfavourable circumstances of the state,  
and of concealing others.

*The first of these* related to two objects,  
internal government and foreign politics;  
and hence, about this time, moderation came  
to be distinguished in the minds of Dutch  
statesmen into two kinds, according to its  
several objects. That of which internal  
government was the object, they styled a  
prudent indulgence of established customs,  
and a prudent respect for received maxims:  
the other branch of moderation, of which  
foreign politics was the object, was in their  
language and ideas a cautious reserve in  
whatever concerned foreign transactions,  
and an absolute neutrality in any contests  
that arose between foreign states.

*Æconomy*, which was the second part in  
this system, was considered to be more sim-  
ple, and was really more uniform in its  
operation, though it extended to a great va-  
riety

riety of points as well in the external as in the domestic administration of the republic; for the character of the people seconded the principle of parsimony on which this part of the political system proceeded, and rendered the measures derived from it operative and efficient. But it may be well questioned whether the consequences that attended the application of this principle, in all the extent in which it was used, proved more salutary or pernicious to the interests of the state.

The third part in the system, *Commerce*, was pursued with equal vigour and effect with the second; but in conducting its operations, the Dutch, at this time, attended exclusively to private emolument, and disregarded every consideration of personal honour and national advantage: so that though some individuals raised fortunes by embarking in trade, the commonwealth may be considered to have been on the whole rather prejudiced than benefited by it.



*Reform*, being not only inconsistent with that indulgence and respect which was professedly held forth for established customs and received maxims, which were but other words for established abuses and their pretexts, but also clashing with the private interests of individuals, perhaps too powerful to be easily controlled, was never seriously entered upon; so that this fourth part in the system was rather designed to give an appearance of patriotism and plausibility to the measures of administration, than to produce any considerable or permanent effect in the state.

*The fifth part* of the plan of government laid down on this occasion, was, however, very different in the success that attended it; for it was not only the most considerable and the most invariably applied to business of any in the whole system, but its principles being deeper laid, and its consequences embracing a greater number of objects of magnitude, and of subjects of delicacy, than any of the other parts, the skilful  
manage-

management of it required knowledge and ability, experience and art, and the ablest and most distinguished characters of the republic were employed in the direction of it. It may of course be considered as the leading part of Dutch politics for several years past, and the occasional avowal or exposition of some unfavourable circumstances of the state, and the occasional concealment of others, may be considered as the great political principle of Dutch statesmen in their foreign negotiations, as well as in their internal government during that period.

Thus this system of mysterious and corrupt policy having been entirely adopted by the ruling powers of the commonwealth, it became the rule of the leading measures of the Dutch. In it we have seen that the extension of commerce was the chief point aimed at, œconomy an end steadily pursued, the preservation of peace a great object proposed, reform affected to cover existing abuses, and the occasional avowal or con-



concealment of certain unfavourable circumstances of the state, the main spring to regulate, or put the whole in motion. By this avowal or concealment, made as circumstances arose, or as occasions required, the government apologized for the failure of their engagements to their allies; they justified their general conduct in foreign affairs; they excused the meanness of their œconomy, the illiberal principles of their commerce, the supineness of the internal administration, and the whole tenor of their measures both at home and abroad. They, in short, comprised the whole art of governing, in the politic management of this avowal or concealment.

To find such principles adopted, and to see such a system pursued, was a matter of the most serious and indignant affliction to all those who regarded the honour, or attended to the permanent interests of the commonwealth. For they saw that the tendency of such a plan of administration was ultimately to impair the strength, to  
reduce

reduce the consequence, and to lower the declining dignity of the state; they saw that it was impossible to maintain its honour without spirit, or its power without arms, or a proper naval and military force without levying greater taxes than the people were willing to pay, or a powerful party in the republic desirous to employ; they saw that reputation for integrity could alone procure credit abroad; that reputation for strength could alone insure security at home; that a conscientious regard to good faith has seldom stood in the way of powerful princes to oppose their laying hold of a favourable occasion, when it offered, of seizing upon the possessions, or of obtaining commercial advantages of any competitor; and that to expose the weakness of the republic, would not the less incline her neighbours to attend to the suggestions of ambition and the dictates of policy, or give additional strength to political conventions, so as to withhold them from taking advantage of her calamities, and attacking her in the height of her distress.



All however that they could object, and all the arguments that they could oppose on this occasion against this system of administration, were considered as the effusions of disaffection, or the groundless apprehensions of ignorance and inexperience, and they passed consequently unregarded by the ruling powers, not without some expressions of contempt for the persons who proposed them. These, who were some of the most virtuous and respectable members of the commonwealth, did not consider it to be the first of virtues to bear with moderation the indignities which they conceived were offered to themselves and to their country, and the resentment produced in them, by the treatment which they received, contributed to augment the general mass of dissatisfaction and discontent.

## SECTION

## S E C T I O N IV.

**A**LL these causes of weakness and dissension, which originated in the measures of ministers, the temper of the Stadtholder, the situation of the commonwealth, and the spirit of faction, might have been removed, or at least controlled in their effects, as similar causes have often been in other states, were it not for the singular and unhappy constitution of the republic. The government was without doubt, as has been shewn, feeble and corrupt; but the evil effects of its insufficiency or corruption might have been corrected or restrained by the principles of a wise and vigorous constitution. For though it sometimes happens that the best constitutions are undermined and destroyed by a series of weak and wicked measures among a profligate and degenerate people; yet we much more frequently



quently see the wisdom and vigour of the constitution, and the spirit of the people, overturn and destroy a vicious system of government. This is a necessary consequence of the very nature of government and constitution. Government is a system of principles and counsels, which those who are invested with the authority of the state adopt as the rule of their conduct in the administration of power. It is in its nature fluctuating, like the objects to which it is applied; it is variable like the characters of those who administer it; and it is liable to the corruption and fallibility incidental to human nature, like all the other works and productions of man. The abuses that may be made of it, being however the most indignant and intolerable to human feelings, most civilized nations have established some permanent system of principles and ordinances to direct, to restrain or to control its operations, as circumstances arose or as exigencies required. These principles and ordinances have been always derived either from right reason, or from some prejudice,

or some opinion so generally received and so firmly established among these nations, as to pass currently for reason, or at least to produce some of its effects on the minds of men, and they have been always directed to the public good, either real or imaginary. The system which they compose is called the *constitution*, the *fundamental laws* of the state, and the great ends of it always are, first, to point out to the ruling powers and to the subject the conditions upon which the people have agreed to be governed; and secondly, the mode by which redress may be obtained for any violations of these conditions and of this agreement; from the well known maxim of law and polity, *that no right can exist without a remedy to enforce it*. As the relations of men living in society extend to many and remote objects, these conditions are numerous and complex; they all, however, either expressly or by implication, tend to protection and security. Security of person, security of opinion, and security of property. To enforce these conditions, and to enjoy this security,



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security, different nations have employed different secondary means, and these means and ends, these principles and ordinances, these objects and relations, have been combined in an infinite number of modes since men first formed civil society, or engaged in social life. Every combination however that can be made of them, ever had, in every age and in every country, some tendency to repress, or to modify the abuses and excesses which the arts, or the weakness, or the corruption of those who held the administration, might introduce into the government of the state. Only in some the tendency was clear, positive and direct, and there the constitution was accurate and defined; while in others this tendency was vague and obscure, and there the constitution was weak, preposterous and irregular.

But of all the political constitutions that have been framed by legislators, or defined by lawyers, or described by historians, none appears to have been so weak and illiberal, so irregular and inaccurate, so preposterous and

and undefined as that of the Dutch. And in the nature of it may be found many causes that aggravated and extended the malignant symptoms, with which, through a weak administration, an ill government, and other causes that have been already mentioned, their commonwealth has been for some years affected.

But this will best appear by entering into a succinct account of the constitution itself of the Dutch republic.

The seven provinces of the United Netherlands do not, to speak accurately and precisely, constitute *one commonwealth*, but rather *seven*, which, in the year 1579, were by the union of Utrecht joined in *one confederacy*. Even each province is rather a *confederacy* of several cities or districts, than *one state*. For the several cities and districts in each province treat with each other like independent confederates, and not as dependent members of the same body, of which there is a supreme head, or in which business is determined by a majority of voices.



voices. The constitution in both cities and districts, in the provinces and in the whole confederacy, is merely aristocratical, or oligarchical, the people, except in one district in Friesland, not having the least share in it, either by themselves, or by representatives of their own choosing \*. The sovereign power is *represented* by a senate of about thirty persons, constantly residing at the Hague. This senate is called and styled the assembly of their High Mightinesses the States General †. Their High Mightinesses do not however *possess* the sovereignty, they only *represent* it. They are limited deputies, who are obliged to consult their constituents upon every point of any importance that occurs. The sovereign power is really

\* The system of polity in the cities of the Dutch commonwealth has been already spoken of, see Sec. I, p. 17, an account of the polity of Amsterdam, between which and that of the other towns in the republic there is very little difference.

† The States General are styled their High Mightinesses; the states of Holland, their Noble and Great Mightinesses, and so of the other provincial states.

lodged

lodged in these constituents, who are the senate or council (the *Vrootſchap*) of every town, diſtrict, or body in every province that ſends deputies to the provincial ſtates of the ſaid province. Theſe ſenates, councils, *vrootſchaps*, are in truth the States General; but as they are too numerous \* to be convened without difficulty, for conveniency and diſpatch of buſineſs each province ſends deputies to the Hague. Theſe deputies are choſen and appointed by the *vrootſchaps* (the councils or ſenates), but their powers are extremely circumscribed, and they can conſent to nothing without writing, or returning themſelves to their ſeveral conſtituent towns for inſtructions in that particular caſe. They are authoriſed to concur in matters of order; that is, to continue things in the common, current, ordinary train, and they regulate directly and abſolutely all the affairs of the *generality*.

\* The members of the *vrootſchaps* in the province of Holland alone are, excluſive of the nobles, 648. In the whole republic they amount to above 2300.



*lity* \*. But for the least innovation, the least step out of the ordinary course, new instructions and new powers must be given, either to deliberate or to conclude. Only upon some very pressing emergencies they determine on certain points of government, without consulting their principals †, but then this is done *sub spe rati*, the nature or pressure of the point must be such as to justify the informality of the measure, and the act does not become valid until it has been ratified by the several constituents in the several provinces. The members who compose the assembly of their High Mightinesses are not, like our members of parlia-

\* The conquered towns and acquired territory are called the *generalité*, as belonging not to any particular province, but to the whole republic, the union as they call it; such are the towns and districts of *Maestricht*, *Grave*, and *Bergen op Zoom*, the mayordom of *Bois le Duc*, and other towns in Brabant and Flanders.

† This was the case in the *triple alliance*, which the deputies signed with Sir William Temple, without consulting their constituents; but considering the nature of that treaty, and the situation of affairs at that time, the States General were sure they should not be disavowed by their principals.

ment, sent by their constituents to the national senate for any fixed or limited term, but they are changed as often and continued as long as their constituents think proper. It however sometimes happens that there are a few who are what they call perpetual deputies, that is deputies for life, as is the case at this time of at least two, one of whom is a deputy of the province of Friesland. Nor are they, like our representatives, limited in point of number; each province deposes as many as it thinks proper; but this part of the constitution produces no inconvenience; for they vote by provinces and not by heads; of course there are but seven votes in the States General, and the number of deputies is variable; it has however been never known to exceed 33, nor to be under 26. On matters of importance, *de majoribus*, the plurality of votes does not carry a question in the assembly of their High Mightinesses; unanimity is required for every great act of the seven provinces collectively\*. When however the province

\* The Dutch republic is said to consist of *seven* provinces, and this is true legally and politically speaking,  
but



of Holland has once taken an important resolution of peace or war, or treaty, or alliance, it is very *probable* that the other provinces will come into that measure, but this is only *probable*, it is by no means *certain*, and often a considerable space of time elapses before they will accede to it. When the less considerable provinces perceive that the province of Holland has their concurrence much at heart, they will sometimes annex conditions to it; as the little towns

but it really consists of *eight* provinces. The provinces of the Netherlands are, according to the common computation, seventeen in number; that is, four duchies, *Brabant*, *Limburgh*, *Luxemburgh* and *Guelderland*; *Antwerp* and its district, which is called the *marquisate of the Roman empire*; seven counties, that is, *Flanders*, *Artois*, *Hainault*, *Holland*, *Zealand*, *Zutphen*, and *Namur*; and five lordships, *Friesland*, *Utrecht*, *Mechlin*, *Overysfel*, and *Groningen*. Of these seventeen provinces, the eight following are joined in a confederacy by the Union of Utrecht, the fundamental law of the commonwealth,—*Guelderland*, *Zutphen*, *Holland*, *Zealand*, *Friesland*, *Utrecht*, *Overysfell*, and *Groningen*. *Guelderland* and *Zutphen* are now politically united so as to constitute only one province of the confederacy, and this reduces the number, and gives rise to the appellation of the *Seven United Provinces*.

in

in Holland frequently do, when they find that the great cities want their concurrence \*. However, should one, or even two of the lesser provinces, who contribute little, and pay still less to the public charge, obstinately, or frivolously, or corruptly persist in opposing a measure which Holland, and the other more considerable provinces thought necessary, and had agreed to, they would send a deputation to those opposing provinces to reason with them, and to persuade them to concur; but if this should not do, they would, as they have done in many instances, conclude without them. But as

\* Of this there are numberless instances, of which one may be given. In the year 1731 it became necessary to procure the accession of the republic to the treaty of Vienna, which had been secretly concluded at the Hague by the *Comte Sinzendorf*, the *Earl of Chesterfield*, and the *Grand Pensionary Slingelandt*; all the towns in Holland came readily into it, except the *Briel*, whose deputies would not give their consent to it, until one *Vandercrap*, who had numerous connections at that place, and was an officer in the army, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. When that was done they approved of the treaty.



this is absolutely unconstitutional, it is avoided as much as possible, and a complete unanimity procured, if it can be, by some concessions or persuasions. In the assembly of their High Mightinesses, there is no regular and constant chairman, whose office is correspondent to that of the speakers in our two houses of parliament. Each province presides alternately for one week; during that week the most dignified of its deputies fills the chair, and is called the *president of the week*. A ministerial officer called the *Greffier*, is secretary, or register of the assembly, and his place, answering to that of secretary of state with us, is for life, or at least while he can discharge the duties of it, and is one of the most honourable, lucrative, and important in the commonwealth.

The seven provinces being seven distinct sovereignties, confederated together, form the republic, no one having any superiority over or dependence upon any other, only that in point of precedence,

*Guelder-*

*Guelderland* is the first\*: it however is very natural to suppose, and very true in fact, that the province of Holland, from its great superiority in strength and riches, and paying singly near three-fifths of what is levied for the public service in the whole commonwealth, should have great weight and influence in the other six provinces; legal constitutional power over them it has none; for by the act of union, *Groningen*, the smallest, and the poorest of the provinces, is as much sovereign, as the great, populous, and wealthy province of Holland†.

Besides representing the sovereignty, their High Mightinesses direct all the operations

\* When the union of Utrecht was entered into in the year 1579, *Guelderland* was the first mentioned, and of course has had the precedence ever since that time. *Overyssel* and *Groningen* were not at that time included in the union, to which they did not accede until afterwards, so that they are the last in points of ceremony or precedence.

† From the great weight and influence of the province of *Holland*, it is often taken singly, but very improperly, for the republic.



of the finances of the republic jointly with the council of state; they commission the chief officers of the army and navy, on the *nomination*, or *presentation*, or *recommendation* of the Stadtholder, Admiral and Captain-general\*; they appoint in the same manner the governors of the towns and foreign settlements of the commonwealth; they constitute and pay all the ministers of the state in foreign courts; and they superintend the general administration in all its different departments.

With regard to the assemblies of their Noble and Great Mightinesses the provincial states, the constitution of them is various in different provinces, but their powers are all equal and similar.

\* Whether it be on the *nomination*, *presentation*, or *recommendation* of the Stadtholder, Admiral and Captain-general; whether it be as a matter of *favour* or of *right* that their High Mightinesses attend to the Prince on these occasions; whether they be the *chief* only, or the *general*, or the *field* and *flag*, or *all*, military and naval officers that are thus promoted, is not clearly ascertained by the constitution.

The

The provincial states of Holland consist of deputies sent by the senates, councils, *vrootfchaps*, of the eighteen cities of the province, who have the valuable privilege of being represented in that assembly, and of the equestrian order, *the corps of nobles*. Each of these cities sends as many or as few deputies as the *regency* in it thinks expedient; but whatever the number may be, they have all no more than one vote; so that of course there are but nineteen votes in the states of Holland. Unanimity is constitutionally requisite for every act of the province separately; but this is not always very strictly observed, for fourteen or fifteen of the principal towns of Holland will conclude an affair, notwithstanding the opposition of three or four of the inferior ones.

The Hague is the place of meeting of the provincial states of Holland, as well as of the States General; but the one, no more than the other, can conclude or determine no affair of importance without consulting their constituents.



The constitution of the states of *Zealand* is very different: when popery was prevalent, and the nobility in the province numerous, the states consisted of three classes of men, and as each class had but one vote, however great it might have been, there were but three votes in the assembly. These three classes were, 1st. the clergy;—2dly. the equestrian order;—and 3dly. the deputies of five cities, who had the privilege of sending representatives, chosen or appointed by their *vrootfchaps*, to this assembly. When, on the introduction of the reformation, the doctrines of popery were exploded, the possessions of the clergy were appropriated to public purposes, their persons were expelled from the province, and of course their seats in the provincial assembly became vacant: in consequence of this, the votes in the states were reduced to two, those of the equestrian order, and of the deputies of the cities. This circumstance was either attended with some real inconvenience, or, what is more probable, did not suit the prejudices and habits of men. In  
order

order to remove the one or to accommodate the other, by restoring things to their original state in the assembly, a third voice was created and given to the towns of *Zericksee* and *Tergous*, who had acquired considerable portions of the possessions of the popish ecclesiastics; that is to say, the *vrootfchaps* in these two towns were allowed to send their deputies to the states of the province, and to deliberate and vote there in the room of the clergy who had been expelled. Matters were thus put on nearly their original footing, but the extinction of all the nobility of the province except the Prince of Orange, who, as Marquis of *Fleſingen*, is a member of the equestrian order of Zealand, produced in the course of time another alteration. The princes of this family being always at the head of the army could not sit or vote in the states, where no naval or military officer can have a seat or a voice, so that the provincial states were again upon the point of being reduced to two votes, which had been already found so disagreeable or inconvenient.



To prevent such an event from happening, it was settled that the Prince of Orange should constitute a person to sit as his representative, that is, to represent the equestrian order in the provincial states. Pursuant to this regulation the Prince appoints some one of the most dignified and opulent men of the province to that office, which is usually held during pleasure, and the person who holds it is called the *first noble of Zealand*; so that now the votes in the assembly of that province are three; that of the equestrian order, which is represented by the *first noble of Zealand*, the Prince of Orange's deputy; that of the ecclesiastics or clergy, who are by a fiction of law supposed to be represented by the deputies of *Zericksee* and *Tergous*; and that of the five ancient cities, who at all times had the privilege of sending their deputies to the states. Unanimity is necessary for most acts of importance in the states of this province, but there are some points on which the majority conclude and determine without attending to the opposition of the third; this however  
is

is irregular, and sometimes attended with many evil consequences. \*.

The constitution of the provincial states of *Friesland* is still more intricate and preposterous; there are cities that send deputies appointed by their *vrootſchaps* or councils; there are nobles who vote personally or by proxy in the assembly; and, what is not to be met with in any of the other provinces, there are certain freeholders in a district of this country, who choose representatives much in the same manner as we choose our members of parliament†, who sit and vote in the provincial assembly.

To enter into a detail or an inquiry about the respective rights and privileges claimed

\* The states of *Zealand* sit at *Middleburg*, a large and beautiful city in the island of *Walcheren*.

† The dialect and manners of the people of this district bear a strong resemblance to those of some parts of England: they have a more lofty, generous, and independent spirit than most of their countrymen. The district is called *Westergoe*.



or enjoyed by these several orders of men, which even they have themselves never accurately defined, would lead to deductions of immeasurable length; it will be then only necessary to add, that unanimity, which is constitutionally necessary for every act of the province, is more seldom met with here than in the other states of the union; and that their assemblies in *Friesland* partake much more of the nature of popular meetings; more of the freedom, the generosity, and the turbulence of popular governments than the other provincial states of the commonwealth.

The constitutions of the provinces of *Utrecht*, *Overijssel*, and *Groningen*, are nearly alike, and differ very little from that established in the province of *Holland*.

In the province of *Guelderland*, which as has been said includes that of *Zutphen*, the nobility are very numerous, and the spirit of the people is less commercial than those of the other provinces are. The equestrian  
order

order is very powerful, the inhabitants in general inclined to a martial life, and the country neither productive of materials for manufacture, nor very favourably situated for conducting the operations of an extensive commerce; all these circumstances have considerable influence on the spirit of the constitution, which in its leading traits resembles that of the neighbouring provinces of *Utrecht* and *Overyffel*.

One circumstance is common to all the cities, the districts, the political bodies, and the provinces taken separately, as well as to the whole seven provinces of the union taken collectively; this is, that every act made, every resolution entered into, every measure adopted on affairs of importance (*de majoribus*), must be passed with unanimity, to pass constitutionally.

Another circumstance equally common to them all, both separately and collectively, is, that what constitutes *an affair of importance* (*a majus*) has never been in any of them defined with legal accuracy and precision:



cision: besides, there is a principle of commerce, not of natural commerce, founded on felicity of resources, extent of dominion, or fertility of soil, but of artificial commerce, raised by regulation, restriction, and policy, that predominates in the whole system; and the spirit of this intricate and extensive trading interest, so completely pervades the whole, as to qualify constantly and to control sometimes every general idea of regular constitution in the state.

What inexhaustible sources of internal contest and dissension all these circumstances have ever afforded, is sufficiently obvious,

In the first place here is a great republic, composed of a vast mass of heterogeneous schemes of policy, all of them free in their forms, but tyrannical in their genius.

Secondly—Here is a system of commerce secured by a multitude of restraints inconsistent with freedom, liberality, or vigour.

Thirdly—Here is a degree of unanimity,  
so

so positively, so absurdly, and in fact so impracticably required, that it must be often abandoned, though in open and direct violation of the legal constitution of the state.

Fourthly—Here are objects of the first magnitude in judicial and political speculation left in the utmost uncertainty and obscurity, wholly undetermined upon by the constitution.

Lastly—Here is no executive authority adequate to maintain the political rights of men, or to assert and support the dignity of the laws.

In short, the constitution of the Dutch commonwealth appears to have all the faults of the three famed systems of polity, without any of the good qualities that serve in some measure to moderate the evils incidental to these constitutions. It admits neither of secrecy, nor of strength, nor of dispatch: in it we find the despotism of monarchy without its vigour; the insolence of aristocracy without



without its wisdom; and the weakness of democracy without democratical freedom.

How a constitution of this kind came to have been established among a people by no means destitute of either good sense or a high spirit, may be worth inquiry, and the more especially as it will naturally lead us to treat of the nature of the offices and influence of the house of Orange in the republic, of which nothing has been yet said; but in order to explain this, it will be necessary to state briefly what the condition of these provinces was in earlier ages.

The provinces commonly called the Netherlands were originally comprehended under *Gaul* or *Germany*, according to their situation on this or the other side of the Rhine, the ancient boundary of those countries. That part of them which was situated on this side of that river was, together with the rest of Gaul, subjected to the Roman empire by *Julius Caesar*: afterwards the *Batavi* and the inhabitants of *Zealand* voluntarily submitted to the Romans, in such a manner

manner however, as to have been considered rather as subordinate allies than subjects of these civilized conquerors.

In the beginning of the sixth century, when the *Franks*, under *Clovis*, founded a new kingdom in Gaul, these provinces were united to it. After the death of this barbarian, when his dominions were divided among his sons, Germany, together with most of the Netherlands, was separated from France, with which neither have been since firmly connected. In the dark and superstitious ages which succeeded this event, the governors of these provinces, under the various titles of dukes, margraves, earls, prelates, and lords, erected themselves into feudal sovereigns, as several others of the same rank did in those times in other countries. They however generally governed the people with as much mildness and equity as the tempers of unpolished men in a barbarous age would admit of; and for the security of their liberty, privileges were occasionally granted to the people



ple by their sovereigns, in maintaining of which the inhabitants of the Netherlands have been frequently equally active, zealous, and successful. They in the course of time established national assemblies called the *states*, which commonly consisted of the clergy, the citizens, and the nobility: these states were usually held in great reverence and esteem, they possessed considerable authority, and they seldom suffered their countrymen or their constituents to be oppressed by the exaction and imposition of illegal taxes, or other wanton and unjustifiable acts of power.

These provinces, as has been already said, were seventeen in number, each of which was governed, after the division of the empire of the Franks, by its own feudal sovereign or lord: but in the course of time, and by a series of civil and political events, by marriage, inheritance, or compact, several of them were united under the government of one prince. Afterwards the greatest part of them fell to the house of Burgundy,

gundy, from which they were transmitted to the house of Austria, by the marriage of Maximilian I. with Mary, the daughter and sole heiress of Charles the Hardy, on whose death the male line of the Burgundian family became extinct\*.

By the emperor Charles V. the grandson of this princess, the whole of the seventeen provinces were added to his hereditary dominions, and he governed them during a long and active reign, with great popularity and glory. This great monarch was born in the capital†, and was educated among the inhabitants of the Netherlands; his character was entirely void of that haughtiness, severity, and reserve, which have ever been so unpopular among a peo-

\* *Charles the Hardy*, son of Philip the Good, married, when Comte de Charolais, to Margaret Plantagenet, sister to Edward IV. He was slain at the battle of Nancy in Lorraine, in the year 1476.

† At *Ghent*, in Flanders, which was at that time, though it be not now, the capital of the Low Countries.



ple so characteristically plain, simple and free, as the Flemings; he conversed with his subjects of these provinces in a friendly and familiar manner; he employed their nobles frequently and successfully in the command of his armies, in the conduct of his negotiations, and in the management of the affairs of his internal government; he preserved the privileges of the citizens; he attended to the claims of the ecclesiastics; he protected the rights, and he spoke the language of the people\*: all these circumstances rendered his person beloved, and his administration popular.

But under the reign of his son Philip II. the state of affairs in the Low

\* Charles V. had once taken a resolution to erect the seventeen provinces into one kingdom; but he respected the rights, the claims, and perhaps the prejudices of the inhabitants so far, that he set that design aside: he found their several laws, customs, and privileges so different, and they so jealous of one another, that none of them would remit any thing of their pretensions in favour of the rest, that he prudently feared to attempt carrying it into execution.

Countries became entirely changed: the Netherlands were rent by commotions and civil wars, and the dissensions ended in the establishment of the Dutch commonwealth. The principles of these discontents, of the subsequent war, and of the final revolution, are various, complex, and numerous; they may be all however ultimately reduced to five great original causes.

First—The haughtiness, severity, and reserve of the king, and his prejudice in favour of the Spaniards, their customs, their manners, their laws, their institutions, and their language, disgusted a great number of all ranks among the Flemings.

Secondly—The nobility, who were naturally turbulent, were impoverished by their attendance on the court, and by the efforts which they made, without being supported by the emoluments of office, to rival the splendour and magnificence of the Spanish courtiers, they became involved in debt, and were not averse to a civil war, in the



course of which they might repair their ruined fortunes.

Thirdly — The clergy were discontented, because Philip II. having erected several new episcopal sees, determined to employ the revenues of several abbies in endowing of them ; this measure incensed not only those ecclesiastics who were in actual possession of these abbies, but others also who had expectations of being raised to them in the process of time ; for the abbots were chosen by a free election of the monks in each monastery and abbey, but the new bishops were nominated by the king.

Fourthly—All the several bodies of men who had relinquished the doctrines of the Roman church, were exasperated by the severe proclamations issued against their tenets, and the minds of many were inflamed with a desire of religious innovation.

Fifthly—The people in general were alienated from Philip and Spain, by the attempt to introduce the Inquisition among them,  
by

by the illegal imposition, and harsh exaction of imposts, and by the general oppression and tyranny of the government.

These original causes of discontent were aggravated and extended by many other secondary causes. First, by the bigotry, the superstition, and the blind attachment to the see of Rome, which distinguished and disgraced the character of Philip II. Secondly, by his desire from political motives of obliging the Pope personally at that time. Thirdly, by the arts of his Spanish ministers, and the adulation of his Spanish courtiers, both of whom saw with pleasure the commencement of hostilities in the Netherlands, in the confiscations that they doubted not would be consequent on which, they hoped to have a considerable share. Fourthly, by his own mistaken and iniquitous policy, which led him to consider these hostilities in the beginning rather as advantageous than detrimental to his interests; because they afforded him an opportunity, or a pretext of forcing the provinces to obedience,



of suppressing entirely their liberties and privileges, of reducing them under the same absolute power which he exercised in all his other extensive dominions; and when reduced to this state, the country offered him a grand magazine, from whence he might conveniently attack England, France, and the northern powers, the great obstacles to the execution of his ambitious designs. Fifthly, by foreign princes, who administered fuel to the flame which broke out in the Low Countries. But sixthly, chiefly and above all, by the arts and the talents, the private views, and the ambitious projects of William I. commonly called the *taciturne*, the *silent* Prince of Orange.

This prince, who was without dispute one of the ablest men that any age or country has produced, covered the highest ambition with the appearance of the greatest modesty, and declined the insignificant exterior trappings of authority, as much as he desired the solid substance of power. When he understood that Philip II. had  
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taken the resolutions of going into Spain, of establishing his chief residence in that country, and of committing the administration of the Netherlands to a governor-general, or viceroy, he conceived a plan of procuring *Christina*, Duchess of Lorraine, to be constituted regent of the Low Countries, and at the same time by marrying her daughter to secure to himself the chief direction of affairs under her government. But both parts of this plan were defeated by the king, who refused to give his consent to the proposed marriage, and appointed the Duchess of Parma, Margaret of Austria, natural daughter of the emperor Charles V. regent, and Cardinal Granvelle, a native of Burgundy, chief minister under her, of the seventeen provinces. The mortification and the disappointment which William I. received on this occasion, added sentiments of resentment and the desire of revenge, to principles of ambition and an inordinate love of power, and the complex operation of these sentiments, principles and passions combined together in a mind so profound,



so expansive and so vigorous as his, produced such measures, and events as terminated in separating eight of the provinces from the rest, and in forming them into a distinct and independent state. When by a series of wise counsels, vigorous conduct, and fortunate events, affairs had been brought to this conclusion; from the decisive ascendancy which he possessed over his countrymen, he had indisputably the modelling of the infant commonwealth as he pleased. This great work he accordingly undertook; and doubtless he would have ill deserved the character which he acquired for ability and ambition, had he neglected to assume the government to himself, and to entail it on his posterity, did circumstances and conjunctures favour the success of such a measure \*. This however was not the case. The current of popular opinion set with so much violence against monarchy, that it seemed

\* He at first had a design upon the absolute sovereignty, which was in fact offered to him by the States of Holland (except Amsterdam and Gouda) and by Utrecht and Zealand, but this was afterwards dropped,

seemed not only hazardous, but desperate to attempt to establish *formally* in the state, a constitution founded on the absolute authority of a single person. Such a system of polity he therefore abandoned all thoughts of *formally* settling in it. But though general policy determined him to comply thus far with the prevailing prejudices of the people, private policy induced him to attend to his own private interests, and those of his family, in modelling the commonwealth. The temper of the inhabitants, the situation of affairs, the conjunctures of the times, the habits of the regencies, the old constitutions of the provinces, and his own great genius enabled him to do this without creating alarm, or exciting opposition. For few in that age, besides himself, either perceived the tendency, or foresaw the consequences of the constitution which he formed.

The Netherlands, on the subversion of the empire of Clovis, were, as has been said above, divided into several distinct sovereign-



vercignities, in which the feudal system was gradually introduced, in some with an extensive, in others with a more limited influence, but in all, with such effect as to control the principles of Roman government and jurisprudence, which had until then prevailed among all the civilized nations of the west. In this system of northern polity the rights of men or citizens were little known or attended to, for it was solely calculated for the relations of soldiers and the transactions of war. But after some ages its vigour began to decline in these countries. The people began to feel their own consequence, and various privileges and immunities were successively obtained by individuals, by corporate bodies, by towns, and by whole provinces of different sovereigns. These privileges and immunities were sometimes the rewards of loyalty and valour, sometimes the concessions of weakness, sometimes the acquisitions of violence, sometimes the bounty of the prince, and sometimes the purchase of the subject. They of course differed according to

to the causes in which they originated, the principles on which they were obtained, the occasions on which they were granted, and the circumstances in which they were acquired. Hence the political systems which they composed were necessarily various and different, and hence those established finally in the provinces and subordinate political divisions, or districts of the Netherlands, were numerous and discordant, often incompatible, and sometimes absurd. Hence too their internal laws, their municipal institutions, their principles of policy varied. Among a people speaking the same language, inhabiting the same climate, distinguished by the same character, and engaged in the same pursuits, there has perhaps never been before found such a diversity in government, jurisprudence and constitution, as the seventeen provinces, and their inferior districts, have for above three centuries exhibited in the Low Countries. But however different or inconsistent they may be supposed by the theories of philosophy, or the systems of statesmen, it is very certain  
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that every individual of the Netherlands has ever been firmly attached to those particular forms of each, to which he was most accustomed, to those under which it was his fortune to be born or educated. This the emperor Charles V. experienced, when he wished to realise the resolution which he had taken to erect the seventeen provinces into one kingdom. And finding their customs, constitutions and privileges so different, and they so jealous of one another, that none of them would remit any of their pretensions in favour of the rest, he prudently desisted from the execution of his design.

The vices of constitution, which this emperor through policy wished to correct, by reducing these complex and discordant systems to some consistence, uniformity and simplicity, and erecting all the provinces into one kingdom, William the Silent, through the influence of the same motive, determined to extend and to confirm when he united eight of them in one republic.

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To this end he ordained it to be a fundamental law of the union, that is of the commonwealth, that all the provinces of the confederacy should be co-equal, that all the towns in the provinces should be co-ordinate, and that unanimity should be constitutionally requisite for every act of each town and of each province separately, and for every act of the *seven* \* collectively. At the same time to render this unanimity the more difficult to be obtained without his own interference or consent, he extended the privileges of representation and voting in the states, to several small towns and districts, that had never before enjoyed them; and who were entirely dependant on himself and on his family, and of course obsequiously devoted to the interests of both. In this absurd constitution, which however seemed to fall in with the prejudices of the

\* In compliance with the style of Dutch lawyers and statesmen, the republic is called the *Seven United Provinces*, though there are really *eight* provinces of the Netherlands, in the union, besides the *generalité*. See *above*, p. 126, note, and p. 127 and 128, note.

people,



people, he foresaw that a stadtholder would become absolutely necessary to render the government practicable, in which case he was very sure that such a supreme magistrate would be always invariably taken from the house of Orange. Experience has since justified the wisdom of his views and the solidity of his theory. This monstrous unanimity so positively required by the constitution, was alone sufficient to bring about a stadtholder, because it could be only rendered practicable by the influence of such a supreme magistrate in the commonwealth. And we have seen that in spite of all the measures of the high republican party, when through the opposition of the ministers of the state, a stadtholder could not be regularly appointed according to the established forms of the law, one has been tumultuously imposed upon the republic by an insurrection of the populace, as in the case of William III. after the French invasion, in the year 1672; and of the late Prince of Orange, in the year 1748, after *Lowendahl's* conquest of *Bergen op Zoom*.

## S E C T I O N V.

**T**HE vices of the constitution of the Dutch commonwealth, the sources from which they were derived, the causes that confirmed them, and the tendency which they had to the tumultuous establishment of supreme magistracy in the house of Orange, have been succinctly explained in the foregoing section.

We now come to treat of the powers exercised or claimed in the republic, by the eldest prince of that family, since the year 1748, when the Dutch system of polity was in a great measure new modelled, and the offices of stadtholder, admiral and captain-general of the union, were by the voice of the people irregularly settled, and afterwards by the formal acts of the several states, legally



gally confirmed and rendered hereditary in the descendants of William IV.

These powers are of various kinds, according to the objects to which they apply, the principles from which they derive, or the circumstances in which they are administered; they differ in nature and effect, in the titles by which they are assumed, and in the mode in which they operate. Hence they partake of that irregularity and want of precision, which so fatally pervade the whole scheme of Dutch government and politics; and hence too the exercise of them is sometimes liable to be contested or opposed; to excite resentment, and to occasion disorder. The same inaccuracy and indecision, which may be considered as the causes of these evils, render it difficult to ascertain with so much clearness as such a subject merits, what the exact rights of the supreme magistrate of the state are, for they are as yet in a great degree undefined and undetermined by the constitution of the republic. In times of tranquillity, the  
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cool and serious part of the republicans, avoided through political motives, to examine them closely, and the partisans of the house of Orange thought them a topic too delicate to be profaned by a free discussion; they ranked them, according to the celebrated maxim of the Cardinal de Retz \*, among the *arcana imperii*; and like the mysteries of the Elusinian goddesses, they considered them too sacred to be pryed into by any but the initiated, because perhaps the precise limits of the one, like the secret solemnities of the other, would not bear the inspection of a sober and rational inquiry. Through the influence of these causes, the rights and the duties of the Stadtholder have long continued involved in obscurity; but whatever they may be in themselves, the circumstances on which they are supported, are reducible to three heads,—power, authority and influence. Power founded on

\* Il y a un voile qui doit toujours couvrir tout ce que l'on peut dire, et tout ce que l'on peut croire du droit des peuples, et de celui des princes, qui ne s'accordent jamais si bien ensemble que dans le silence.

*Mem. du Card. de Retz. liv. ii. tom. 1.*

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force and opinion ; authority derived from law or prescription ; and influence acquired by money, by patronage, and by habit.

Of each of these three heads, it will be necessary to treat concisely, in order to explain the political situation of the family of Orange in the Dutch commonwealth. And first, *of the power of the Prince Stadtholder in the republic.*

The power of the Prince, considered in contradistinction to his authority, has ever been, as was just now said, founded on force and on opinion ; but as the combinations that may be made of the several circumstances that constitute force, or that inspire opinion, are various and infinite, the power which is founded on them admits of many gradations, and is necessarily fluctuating. That of the Princes of Orange in the state has of course undergone many revolutions, and suffered many vicissitudes, as circumstances, tempers, and events happened to prove favourable or adverse to their interests. It however at all times depended

depended a great deal upon their own personal character; upon their spirit and their valour, their talents and their policy. When these were lofty and enterprising, splendid and profound, as indeed they were for several successive generations, their power was great, and the obedience paid to it by all the republic and its dependencies, was voluntary, cheerful, and almost unlimited. But when the princes of this family happened to be destitute of these heroic qualities, or to be of an age incapable of shewing or exerting them, the leaders of the high republicans did not fail to employ all the influence and arts of their party, to render them insignificant in the commonwealth\*. Nevertheless, how disagreeable soever the situation of some individuals of that illustrious house might have been at

\* This was the case in the minority of king William, when the heads of the high republican party abolished the office of stadtholder, and passed *the perpetual edict*, by which it was ordained never on any emergency to appoint the Prince of Orange to that supreme magistracy.



certain periods rendered, by the mortifications to which they were exposed, in consequence of the triumph of their opponents; there were always circumstances that concurred to maintain the dignity of their family, to support its consequence, and to prevent a total or permanent decline of its power among the Dutch. Of these circumstances, some have been temporary or accidental, and on these it is unnecessary to dwell. Others were of a more durable and efficient nature; such are their principalities in the empire, their possessions in the Austrian Netherlands, their seignories in the United Provinces, their alliances with some of the great sovereigns of Europe, the general attachment of the people to their interests, and the zeal of the clergy in their cause. All these circumstances tended to support their power in the commonwealth, independent of any legal authority that they possessed. Sometimes too the very measures taken by the violent and impetuous republicans to depress it, served still to corroborate it. For on more than one occasion

sion they pushed things with the most unjust acrimony against the Orange family \*, and by these means gave them the merit with the people of being unjustly oppressed. A merit of no small weight in the opinion of mankind, who are ever inclined to consider the sufferings and the wrongs of persons of the first rank, as supplying the place of virtue and ability. The high descent also of this family, of which the antiquity and illustration are so incomparably beyond those of any other in the republic †, was

\* This was the case of William III. about the middle of the last century, when through the intrigues of *John de Wit*, and the other leaders of the *Louvestein* faction, the perpetual edict was passed. This too was the case of the late Prince of Orange, to whom, through the intrigues of M. M. *Hallewyn*, *Obdam*, and the republican party, his rank in the army was refused in the year 1740, and they kept him out of the possession of the marquisate of Flessingen and the lordship of Tervere, which were his own patrimony.

† The family of *Nassau* is indisputably one of the most ancient and illustrious in Europe. In the 13th century, *Adolphus of Nassau* was elected to the empire, in which he reigned after Rodolphus of Habsburgh. From this emperor, the present family of Orange are descended.



another circumstance, by which its power was supported in the worst of times. For the distinction of birth, however chimerical in itself, has been so long admitted, and so universally received among all civilized nations, that it is generally imagined to confer on those who possess it an evident and indelible superiority. This, those of inferior rank, who might easily imagine themselves to be equal in merit, can not well contest or deny; but they allow it the more willingly, because, though it be an advantage to possess it, to want it can not be reasonably considered as a matter of reproach. On this account men commonly support with cheerfulness the power of those to whom high birth has given this ascendant. And this consideration, joined to the recollection of the distinguished services performed in the defence of the state by William I. (*the Taciturne*) and his successors, was a chief mean in supporting the power of the Princes of Orange in the Dutch republic. Thus these princes had at their command great sources of strength and power, which they found in  
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their birth, their alliances, and their possessions; in the services which they performed, and in the persecutions which they suffered; in the zeal of the clergy in their cause, and in the attachment of the people to their persons. Hence they possessed, independent of any express law or positive prescription, or formal convention, considerable power in the United Netherlands; much in the same manner, and on the same principles that the *family of Medicis* did in the Florentine republic, from the 14th to the 16th century\*.

But although the Princes of Orange indisputably possessed this degree of power, independent of the constitution of the state, it was not always judged prudent to employ it, and that for various cogent

\* From the time of the war with *John Galeazzo Visconti*, duke of Milan, in 1387, when *Veri di Medicis* was at the head of the republic of Florence, to the year 1532, when it lost its liberty, and was by the emperor Charles V. given as a sovereign duchy to *Alexander di Medicis*, who married his natural daughter.



reasons. The exercise of power, unless sanctioned by time or convention, having more the appearance of hostile exertion, than of the salutary operations of legal authority, has been seldom assumed by men of virtue or ability, however they might possess the means of doing it: the measures founded on it or conducted by it are necessarily arbitrary, not determined by fixed rules, but merely by the opinion of the policy and expediency of them, entertained by him who plans or adopts them. Such an exercise of power is besides temporary in its nature and uncertain in its effects; it often destroys the objects which it is intended to preserve; it sometimes defeats the projects which it is proposed to execute; and in the whole history of mankind there is no experience in favour of it, as an instrument of government wholly unconnected with law; for all mankind entertain such stubborn ideas of justice and equity as prevent their ever acquiescing long in high acts of power which are not authorised at least by the appearance of law, or justified by the pressures  
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of necessity. For these reasons, none but men equally void of feeling and of judgment ever entered upon the commission of such flagrant acts, in violation of the rights and in defiance of the opinions of those who are the immediate objects of them.

Sometimes indeed it has happened among a weak and corrupt people, in an ignorant or degenerate age, that by an artful combination of legal principles and fictitious rights, with prevailing prejudices and affected necessity, a sort of unnatural alliance is produced between tyranny and law, and both thus preposterously united become an instrument of rule. At first their operations are usually moderate and tolerable; by trifling beginnings they smooth the way insensibly for greater evils; men are carried by shades and gradations of mischief and extravagancy, not to be surpris'd at the most capricious, nor alarmed at the most violent acts in such a system; and by a natural progression of precedents they are brought to endure, without repining, all the miseries of slavery,  
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and to bear without indignation all the insults of despotism. In this last stage of humiliating debasement, the human mind is degraded in its own esteem, and has not force even to attempt to recover its level by revenge. Since the foundation of the Dutch commonwealth, neither the characters of the princes of Orange were such, as could determine them to adopt a system of this kind, nor was the temper of the inhabitants of the United Netherlands such as offered any probability of introducing it successfully among them if they had. On these two accounts the use which the princes of this family made of the power which they possessed was less violent, certainly more equitable, and perhaps too on most occasions more politic and solid.

The use then that they generally made of it, was, by an occasional interference of its milder operations, to make the citizens and inhabitants of the United Provinces sensible, that the support of the authority of the house of Orange in the commonwealth, was

was inseparable from the private happiness of individuals, and the general prosperity of the state. Various circumstances derived from the monstrous constitution established in the republic by William I. (*the Taciturne*), rendered representations on this head sufficiently plausible: the principalities in Germany and their foreign alliances, afforded them efficient means to enforce them; and money produced many of the effects of reason or argument on the minds of numbers among a people so characteristically avaricious as the Dutch; so that the heads of the Orange party commonly succeeded in their ends, more by the gentle methods of policy and insinuation, which their power, and wealth, and talents, and the state of the republic enabled them to employ, than by the more stern measures of open force, or the sentiments which they inspire.

Though it must be allowed, that on some particular occasions, certain acts of this kind sufficiently arbitrary and violent, were exercised by them; but then the cases were  
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extraordinary, above common rules, such as required a superior interposition, and justified the measures pursued with regard to them by their intrinsic propriety\*. Hence the conduct of these princes in exercising extra-judicially the power which they possessed in circumstances of this kind, seldom diminished any thing of the popularity which they had so honourably earned, and which they so deservedly enjoyed.

The ends which they proposed to themselves, and which they employed this power in a wary and circuitous manner to attain, may to a dispassionate man appear perhaps more exceptionable.

These have been with very little variation, from the first disturbances in the Ne-

\* The execution of *Barneveldt*, and the imprisonment of *Grotius*, by Prince Maurice; William II.'s seizing on *Jacob de Wit*, and five others of the states of Holland; William III.'s depriving Leyden and some other refractory cities of magistrates, sometimes for a whole year, are acts of this nature. Voltaire calls this last prince *Roy des Provinces Unies, & Stadthouder de la Grande Bretagne. Siecle de Louis Quatorze, tom. 1.*

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therlands, in the reign of Philip II. the depression of the rival party, and the establishment of their own *authority* in the commonwealth: that is, to convert the *power* which they generally possessed, independent of the express constitution of the state, and sometimes assumed without the sanction of law, into a legal, permanent and hereditary settlement, made *on* them, formally granted to them by their countrymen, not extorted by force or imposed by violence: a limited sovereignty, no matter under what name, constitutionally and formally framed on the plan of the free polity of Britain.

For near two centuries the general current of their policy tended to these objects with a gentle motion; and though its direction was sometimes checked, and sometimes diverted by the characters of particular persons, and by the accidental circumstances of the times, yet it in the end carried them so far, as to give them a near view of the points at which they wished to arrive. By



what application of their power these objects of their ambition were brought within their reach without any great exercise of violence or usurpation on their part, has been already mentioned; and many of the events, with their probable causes and the measures by which they were conducted, have been related in the preceding part of this discourse. In what manner they employed their power in the republic, independent of the constitution, or when they were invested with no constitutional authority, in order to obtain the supreme magistracy of the state, shall be now briefly repeated.

This power was employed, *First*, to serve the United Provinces in their transactions with foreign states, in which the fame, the conduct, and the alliances of the Orange family were on repeated occasions experienced to be highly beneficial to the commonwealth: such events of course procured the princes of that family great weight at home. Sensible of the advantages which they derived from them, it became a leading maxim  
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of their policy to connect themselves most closely with those sovereigns who were most interested in the fortune of the republic, particularly with the royal families of Great Britain and Brandenburg, who, from religion, policy, and vicinage, were the most natural allies of the Dutch. Accordingly we find, that within the space of a century, there have been no less than five princesses of these two royal houses married into the family of Orange, of whom three were daughters of British monarchs.

*Secondly* — This power was employed, sometimes to unite, sometimes to divide the republic, according as either union or division in the state best suited the Orange interest. The absurd unanimity required by the constitution on all important questions of government, could be in general only rendered practicable by their power; and when they found it necessary for their interest to make their consequence felt, they exerted their power to *divide*, and the disorder that necessarily followed division, produced



duced as necessarily their interference, to restore regular government and internal peace, which long experience has shewn could not be done without it.

*Thirdly*—This power was sometimes employed by the agency of obscure dependants to excite popular tumults, to support the Orange cause and party; for it was a standing maxim with them to preserve the affections of the people, and to engage them actively on their side at whatever risque or expence; a policy of which they have more than once availed themselves with success.

*Fourthly*—As they considered the clergy to be the fittest instruments to move the passions of the people, and to preserve them firm in their attachment to their party, they employed their power to protect and to promote them; and hence it became a maxim of their policy to espouse the sentiments and to patronize the followers of *Gomarus*, whom the clerical order in general held in superstitious veneration, in opposition to the *Arminians*, whom all the orthodox

thodox ecclesiastics considered as heretical expounders of the purest and most interesting doctrines of Christianity.

*Fifthly*—They exerted their power both at home and abroad, in favour of the army, the navy, and the equestrian order, whose affections it was a first principle in their system to make sure of; and in this they completely succeeded by occasional loans, by bounties, by procuring honorary distinctions for some, and by obtaining promotions for other members of these classes of men, whose habits and inclinations naturally led them to favour the government of a single person and the family of Orange.

*Sixthly*—Some of the inferior cities, which, since the new modelling of the constitution by William I. have deputies and votes in the states, are situated in the lordships of the Princes of Orange: other towns with the same rights were under peculiar obligations to them, either for loans had, or for bounties received, or for other fa-



vours conferred on them, either in their corporate capacity, or on some of the chief inhabitants. Among these, the power of the Orange family was employed to direct their resolutions, or to influence their deliberations, so as to counterbalance the weight of the old independent cities in the republic.

Thus, independent of the constitution and express laws of the commonwealth, the Princes of Orange possessed great power;—1st. In all that related to the foreign transactions of the state;—2dly. In conducting in an orderly manner the internal government;—3dly. In managing the spirit of the people;—4thly. In directing the conduct of the clergy;—5thly. In ruling the sentiments of the army, the navy, and the equestrian order;—6thly. In determining the resolutions of many of the inferior cities.

From the exercise of power in all these points, with but few and short interruptions, from the first foundation of the republic, it came at length to be considered,  
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by the partisans of the house of Orange, to be in some measure a prescriptive, though undefined right: but of this we may speak at large with more propriety when we come to treat of the second head, to which we have said above (page 161) that the circumstances on which the rights of the Prince of Orange are supported, might be reduced.

The second head to which I allude, is, **AUTHORITY.**

Political power, sanctioned by law, or by unequivocal prescription, that is, by formal convention, or by long immemorial usage, generally and indisputably received, is properly called *authority*.

In order to treat of that of the Prince of Orange, in the Dutch commonwealth, with some clearness and precision, we shall consider him under four different views:—1st. With regard to his Title;—2dly. His Duties;—3dly. His Prerogative;—4thly. His Revenue.

And **FIRST**, with regard to his *Title*.

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By the general consent of the people, and the unanimous confirmation of the several sovereign legislatures of the state, in the year 1748, the supreme magistracy of the republic, that is, the offices of stadtholder, admiral, and captain-general, was vested in a single person; that single person was William IV. the father of the present Prince of Orange: and at the same time, that supreme magistracy, comprehending these offices, was made hereditary in his family in a peculiar manner.

*First*,—The supreme magistracy, &c. is in general hereditary, that is, descendible to the next heir on the demise of the last proprietor, as is the case in most of the hereditary sovereignties of Europe.

*Secondly*,—The manner of its descent is peculiar; it in general corresponds with that particular mode of inheritance which prevailed in the feudal system with regard to landed estates: like these, the offices and dignities, &c. of the supreme magistrate of the Dutch commonwealth descend lineally

neally to the issue of the reigning prince. As in common descents too, the preference of males to females is observed; the right of primogeniture among the males is adhered to, and on failure of the male line, the inheritance descends to the female issue. Here too the evident necessity of preserving the succession indivisible occasioned the right of primogeniture among the females to be observed, though contrary to the maxim of the feudal law.

In both the male and the female line, the doctrine of representation prevails in the descent of the supreme magistracy of the state; so that the lineal descendants of any person deceased stand in the same place as their ancestor if living would have done. On failure of all lineal descendants it goes to the next collateral relations of the late prince, provided they are lineally descended from William, Prince of Orange, the first acquirer (*perquisitor*) of it: and herein there is no objection to the succession of a brother, uncle, or other collateral relation of



the *half* blood, that is, where the relationship proceeds not from the same *couple* of ancestors, which constitutes a kinsman of the *whole* blood, but from a *single* ancestor only; as when two persons are derived from the same father, and not from the same mother; or from the same mother, and not from the same father; only it is provided, that the single ancestor from whom both are descended be that from whom the blood of the Orange family is communicated to each.

And thus far, with regard to general title and succession, is the express, clear, and fundamental law of the commonwealth.

*Thirdly*,—It seems to be only implied, by the terms of the act of convention on this occasion, that the same supreme legislatures who settled this order of succession, may, if unanimous, alter it, or limit it in a different manner: and it is clear, that in cases of the minority, idiotcy, lunacy, imprisonment, or other similar accident of the Prince,

Prince, they have the sole right of settling a regency while such an unfortunate state of things continues.

SECONDLY,—With regard to the *Duties* of the supreme magistrate of the Dutch commonwealth. These are of three kinds, according to the threefold capacity in which he acts.

As *Stadtholder*, the first and most essential of them, and one that is indeed the common duty of every supreme magistrate in every limited system of polity, is to administer the authority committed to him, according to the spirit of the law;—2dly. To maintain inviolate the articles of the union of Utrecht, and the distinct privileges of the provinces as laid down in them;—3dly. To maintain the religion of the state as it is legally established;—4thly. To execute justice in mercy;—5thly. To carry the resolutions of the states into effect in such a manner as may be best for the *whole* confederacy;—And 6thly. To remain faithful to the commonwealth.



As *High Admiral of the Union*, he is charged with the superintendence of the maritime state; and it is his duty to regulate the discipline of the fleet; to inspect into the conduct of the five admiralty boards\* who are charged with the detail of the naval affairs of the republic; and in general, to execute the orders that may be signified to him by the States General, the supreme senate of the republic.

As *Captain General*, he is charged with the superior direction of every thing that relates to the army, and the internal defence of the state; and as such, to maintain and enforce military discipline in all its various branches; to examine into the condition of the fortified towns; to inspect the state of the garrisons; to provide for the necessary magazines, arsenals, &c. are but a part of the complex and important duties of his office.

THIRDLY,—With regard to his *Preroga-*

\* These five boards are, *Amsterdam, the Maes, Zeeland, North Holland, and Friesland.*

*tives.* These may be divided, 1st. Into those that relate to his person, and those that relate to his authority;—2dly. Into those which are on all hands allowed to be legal, and those which are exercised, though their legality is disputed;—3dly. Into those which he exercises as stadtholder, as high admiral, as captain-general, as representative of the old earls of Holland and Zealand, and as a private individual, possessed of certain feignories and rights peculiar to himself, independent of his politic character of supreme magistrate of the commonwealth.

Of each of these somewhat shall be said in order; and 1st. Of the prerogatives that relate immediately to the person of the Prince.

His person is held sacred; no jurisdiction has power to try him legally in a criminal way; he cannot of course be condemned to punishment by law, and consequently he cannot be supposed by the law to commit or to intend a criminal act; for law, which is  
reason



reason applied to action or relation, cannot suppose an absurdity, such as defining a right without a remedy, or a possible injury without any possible redress. To attempt his life is a crime of the first order, equal to high treason among us, and to suppose his death is felony. To violate his wife, to forge his hand or seal, and to obstruct him by open violence in discharging any of the functions of his office, are treasonable offences, and punishable capitally. These are the chief prerogatives that relate merely to his person: the chief points in which he hath a special pre-eminence over and above all other persons in the republic, and out of the ordinary course of the common law.

With regard to the prerogatives of his authority, that is, of his office, they are great and multifarious, and they consist in the discretionary power of acting for the public good where the positive laws are silent: but whatever they may be, they must certainly respect either the intercourse of the commonwealth with foreign states, or its own domestic government and civil polity.

Being

Being left in many instances undefined by the constitution, the right to them is in many cases disputed, though the exercise of them is practised, and hence, as has been said above, they may be divided into the two classes of *contested* and *allowed*, as is mentioned in that place. But this will best appear by considering the Prince of Orange in the several capacities in which, as hath been already said, he exercises them. And first, as to those which he exercises as Stadtholder of the several Provinces of the Union.

*First*, In this capacity, with regard to foreign concerns, he is in *some measure* considered as the delegate of the republic, though not in so great a degree as the king with us is considered as the representative of his people in such affairs. For the Stadtholder, as such, has not the right of sending ambassadors to foreign states, nor of receiving them at home; neither can he enter into alliances, or make treaties, or form leagues; for it is by the law of nations essential to the validity of acts of this kind, that they  
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be made by the fovereign power, and then they are binding on the whole community. But the fovereign power, *quoad hoc* at least, is not vested in the person of the Prince, but in the assembly of the States General. He however has the right of *recommending*, and sometimes of *nominating* persons to fill the employments of the republic's ministers at foreign courts. Their instructions are communicated to him, and they correspond with him regularly on the objects of their mission. And all this is legal and allowed; but what is disputed, though done, on this head of foreign affairs, is, the Stadtholder's right to *instruct* the ministers of the commonwealth, or the duty of the ministers in following his *instructions*, or in obeying his *commands*; for in these cases, the law either pronounces nothing, or is extremely obscure. Upon the same principle that the Stadtholder is, by the constitution, divested of the prerogative of making treaties, forming leagues, and entering into alliances, he is deprived of the right of making war and peace. For the right of making war, which

which by nature subsisted in every individual, is virtually surrendered by all persons that enter into society, and becomes vested in the sovereign power, to whom in this case is transferred, by the fundamental laws of the social state, the right originally enjoyed by the people, either collectively or individually. Wherever the right resides of beginning a war, there also must reside the right of ending it, that is of making peace; and consequently the Stadtholder does not possess this power, which is vested solely in the assembly of the States General. But he has indisputably the right to prevent the subjects of the commonwealth from suffering by depredations from foreign potentates, which prerogative puts it in his power to impel the sovereignty in cases that tend to war; for he can, if he pleases to exercise his authority in its utmost extent, lead them into an incomplete state of hostility, under pretence of protecting the members of the republic, either in their persons or their property, against the lawless violence of a foreign enemy; and this incomplete state of  
hostility



hostility may be led to conclude in a formal denunciation of war. He has also the prerogative of granting passports or safe conducts to foreigners, under his sign manual. And these seem to be his principal rights as Stadtholder, in what relates to the intercourse of the state in which he presides with foreign nations. In domestic affairs, those which he possesses, or at least exercises, are much more numerous.

And 1st, Though he is no constituent part of the supreme legislative power, and has neither a seat in the assemblies, nor a voice in the deliberations of either the provincial states, or their High Mightinesses (except when, on some particular occasions, he makes specific propositions to them on urgent and important points, which are not however considered or debated, still less determined, in his presence), yet he exercises the right of nominating, or recommending most of the members of the smaller assemblies, or *vrootschaps*, in whom this power is ultimately lodged, according to the legal forms

of the Dutch republic. But he exercises this power of not only *nominating* and *recommending* whom he thinks *proper*, but also that of *rejecting* or *disapproving* whoever he thinks *improper* to become members or magistrates in these legislatures. The mode of doing this is different in various cities and provinces. In some, the electors, in case of an accidental or constitutional vacancy, present him with three persons whom they think qualified to fill it, and of these three he approves of one, who is on such approval invested in office. In other places he, by missive letters, nominates or recommends three persons to fill up any vacancy that happens, and of these three the electors choose one, usually the first in the Stadtholder's list, who on such election is vested with authority. In the first of these modes, it is obvious that he acts in much the same manner as the king does with us, in appointing the sheriffs of counties. And in the second, as our sovereign does in promoting by recommendatory letters, and a *congè d'elire*, the prelates and other dignitaries  
of



of our church. But in both modes it is equally plain how valuable this part of the Stadtholder's prerogative is, for by it he is enabled in a great measure to new model the whole senates of the several towns in the course of some years, and the whole magistracy of them in a much shorter term. The misfortune however is, that it has been never formally acknowledged, or expressly allowed by the fundamental laws, or the constitution of the commonwealth, and hence the right to exercise it hath been at certain seasons, as it is at this present time, disputed in some places, and denied absolutely in others. At *Amsterdam* it never was admitted at all, and to this circumstance we are to attribute the low ebb of the Orange party in that great city, and in all the inferior towns and subordinate districts that depend upon it. This great defect in the constitution, and the consequent principle of weakness in the authority of the Stadtholder, a principle of weakness entirely arising from the undefined state of his prerogative on this head, is owing to the want of  
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of spirit and ability in William IV. Had he been an abler man himself, or better advised by others, he might have availed himself much more solidly than he did of the affection of the people in the year 1748, when they tumultuously made him Stadtholder. But he did not perceive the value and importance of those glowing moments, in which he might have clenched his authority, and he left this valuable prerogative in the same state of indecision in which he found it. Thus through want of understanding, or perhaps through an affected moderation, he lost the decisive period, or at least neglected to reap from it all the great advantages which it was capable of affording, and on his death, in 1751, transmitted the government in a loose disjointed state, with a disputed jurisdiction, and an undefined prerogative, to his infant son.

2ndly, Other prerogatives of the Stadtholder, and which are indisputably his legal rights, are those which he exercises as superintendant of the administration of justice.



In this capacity he can pardon all criminal offences (except perhaps those of high treason against the commonwealth, but this is not precisely defined by the laws). He can in certain cases order the suspension of a prosecution, or direct it to be vigorously conducted. And though he has, properly speaking, nothing to do with the making of statutes, or ordinances, which is entirely the work of the sovereign legislatures; yet the manner, the time, the general circumstances of putting those laws in execution, are frequently left to his sole discretion, as supreme magistrate of the state. In this capacity too he has the prerogative of not being *non-suited* in any of the courts of *general justice* in the republic; for by a fiction of law his *ubiquity* is presumed, and hence it follows that a nonsuit, which is the desertion of an action by the non-appearance of the plaintiff in court, cannot happen to him, who is always supposed to be legally present.

3dly, As Stadtholder of the Union, he is hereditary governor of each of the several provinces,

provinces, separately or distinctly considered, and, by his prerogative, has the disposal of many lucrative or honorary offices in them, such as those of great bailiff, master of the chace, forester, inspector of the royalties, &c. He has also the prerogative of conferring privileges on certain persons on particular occasions, and of granting place or precedence to some citizens of the republic.

4thly, He, in the same capacity of Stadtholder, has the prerogative of sitting in, and being at the head of the council of state, and concerts jointly with that body the estimates, propositions, and ways, means, and measures that relate to the civil government of the republic, before they are presented to the supreme legislature to be carried into law.

*Secondly,* With regard to the prerogatives of the Prince as High Admiral of the Union. He is the generalissimo, or first in command in naval affairs within the republic. He has the sole power of regulating and disciplining



plining the fleet, as well as the sole prerogative of engaging and governing the sailors who man it. He has of course the ordering of court marshals, the trying of naval offenders, the dividing of prizes, the direction of convoys, and a share in the property of wrecks. On his *nomination*, all the officers in the fleet, under the rank of rear-admiral, receive their commissions; and at his *recommendation*, which differs rather in the *term* than in the *reality* of the distinction, all the flag officers receive their promotions; the lieutenant-admiral is his immediate deputy, and next to him, the second person in managing the maritime affairs of the state.

*Thirdly*, If the Prince be considered in the next place as Captain-general, he will be found the first in military command within the commonwealth. One of the great ends of society is, to protect the weakness of individuals by the united strength of the association; and one of the principal uses of government is, to direct that united strength  
in

in the manner that may most effectually answer the end proposed. Now, committing the direction of it to a single person has been, by the uniform experience of all ages and nations, found to be the fittest of any for this purpose; and hence the military power has been in most countries under the command of some *one* man. For the first part of the present century, this was not the case among the Dutch; but the abuses that crept into that part of the administration, while it was under the lax and injudicious management of a commercial aristocracy, rendered the army which the public paid for in a great measure useless; so that when the late King of France attacked their frontiers, in the war which was terminated by the last treaty of *Aix la Chapelle*, he found their best towns and their strongest fortresses in so defenceless a state, that they fell an easy prey to his arms. These unfortunate events roused the spirit of the people, by whose exertions the whole military state of the Union was put under the government of the Prince of Orange, who thus became the hereditary



commander in chief of all the forces of the republic. In this capacity he enjoys numerous and important prerogatives. He has the sole power of governing, disciplining and enlisting the troops of the state. On his nomination the officers of the army are commissioned, and on his presentation they are promoted by the assembly of the States General. The forts, the fortresses, all the places of strength in the commonwealth, the militia, and the independent companies, are subject to his command. At his recommendation their High Mightinesses appoint governors, commandants, lieutenants, and other officers to govern them subordinately to his authority. And these it is his prerogative to superintend, to control, and even to punish, in case there is room to suppose that they have conducted themselves remissly or treacherously in the performance of their duty. To give effect to the measures of this part of his administration, there is a council called the *high council of war*, or the *great court martial*, assigned to him by the law. This council is composed of

general officers and others, appointed jointly by him and their High Mightinesses; it sits constantly at the Hague, and he is chief of it, and when present presides in it. It takes cognizance of all violations of military discipline, and of all offences against military law. It inquires into them, judges the offenders, and punishes them in a discretionary manner. And it in some cases assumes the authority of trying and judging all military persons, even in civil cases, and for offences committed against the civil power; but the legal right to this jurisdiction of the high council of war is disputed among soldiers, politicians and lawyers, in the republic. But however it may be disputed, the Captain-general, and the council under his direction, have often exercised it.

The Prince, in this capacity, has jointly with this council an almost absolute legislative power with regard to military offences and their punishments. He may frame such articles of war as he judges expedient, and constitute subordinate court marshals,



or, as they call them, councils of war, with power to try any crime by such articles, and inflict penalties by sentence or judgment of the same. Such penalties to be, however, guided by the subsequent directions of the Captain-general. Thus, to ascertain the precise limits of military subjection seems entirely dependent on his sole will.

Besides all these valuable and important prerogatives, he has that of constantly keeping on foot a numerous corps of body guards for the support of his dignity and the defence of his person \*.

\* During the minority of the present Prince of Orange, the high republicans, headed by Amsterdam, proposed to the Princess Regent (the Princess Royal of England, his mother) to disband these guards; but she, who had sense and spirit, and ambition, expressed herself on that occasion with such firmness and resolution, that the reduction of them was no longer urged to her. The dread of having their intentions discovered, and their future projects disconcerted by the vigour of the Orange party at that time, induced these republican leaders to acquiesce in the determination of the Princess not on any account to reduce this corps, which is in a particular manner attached to the guard of the Prince's person, and they have since that time been constantly kept on foot.

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Of what magnitude and importance all these rights and powers of the Prince, as Captain-general, are, must appear sufficiently obvious. By the judicious management of them, on most occasions, except when the unaccountable prejudices of the Duke of Brunswic interfered, he had the whole army as entirely at his disposal as if he had been an absolute sovereign. This circumstance in some measure accounts for the obstinacy with which the republican party for several years, and on urgent emergencies, opposed all augmentation of the land forces, and it accounts for the eagerness with which he pressed it. To the same cause is to be attributed the readiness with which that party agreed to an augmentation of the fleet, and the indifference with which he considered that resolution when distinct from that, which he often proposed concerning the army. For by the constitution of the maritime state, it was neither so dependent on him, nor so entirely devoted to his interest as the military state, which he governed in a manner absolutely.

Another



Another prerogative which the Prince enjoys as hereditary Captain-general of each province of the Union individually, and of the whole state which they collectively form, is, that the officers and men of all the troops of the commonwealth are obliged, on entering into the service, to take an oath of fidelity and obedience to him. These troops are not, however, considered as his troops, and here his prerogative is deficient; nor are they even looked upon as the troops of the whole Union, and in this the constitution is corrupt. Each province contributes a certain fixed rate of men and money for the general purposes of the army of the confederacy; and the particular corps paid by each province belong immediately to the province that pays them: by a fiction of law they are supposed to be under its immediate orders; these orders, however, cannot be legally transmitted or formally signified to them otherwise than through the medium of the Captain-general, who is the sole commander in chief of the army\*.

\* This right the province of Holland at this very time  
refuses

Fourthly, *As representative of the old earls of Holland and Zealand,*

The Prince enjoys certain valuable prerogatives, of which, however, though some are his indisputable right, many are liable to be contested, though usually exercised. In this capacity he has a right to nominate the presidents, counsellors, and other officers of the court of Holland, the first court of judicature in point of dignity and jurisdiction in the commonwealth. He is sole

refuses to be vested in the Prince. A few days ago, the states of that province, apprehending that orders would have been given by him, to some regiments then in their actual pay, but quartered in the province of Utrecht, to march against the city of Utrecht, sent the most positive injunctions to those regiments, as well as to all their troops in general, not to obey any orders that might be given to them by the hereditary Commander in Chief. Some colonels obeyed the States, but by far the greater number deemed this interference of the States of Holland unconstitutional, as indeed it really is, and therefore determined not to obey any orders that should not come to them through the Prince of Orange.

noble



noble of Zealand, as has been said above\*, in treating of the particular constitution of that province; and he consequently enjoys the prerogative of commanding absolutely *one* of the *three* votes which are in the provincial states of that country. He is also hereditary first noble of Holland, and in both provinces he possesses all the seignorial rights and feoderal royalties that remain in either since the decline of the feudal system, and the establishment of the commonwealth.

The several prerogatives annexed to these are various, complex, and minute; but to enter into a detail of them, or of the reasons on which they are founded, is a matter rather of legal discussion than of political inquiry; so that discourses upon them on this occasion, any farther than what has been cursorily said already, might appear not unjustly misplaced; only it may be added, that most of these prerogatives have been at different times legally recognised, and that all of them have ever been considered by the

\* Section iv. page 136.

Orange party as inherent in the Prince, to whose cause they were themselves devoted.

Lastly, *As a private individual, possessed of certain seigniories peculiar to himself, independent of his political character as supreme magistrate of the commonwealth, the Prince of Orange enjoys numerous prerogatives.*

In the province of *Utrecht*, the first order of the states is composed of the deputies of the five chapters of the diocese, who are called the lay clergy, and the Prince has the prerogative of nominating all the members. In *Friesland* and *Overyssel* he had the sole direction of the *Grieteneyen*, or free manors\*. Throughout the whole province of *Guelderland* he has the direct prerogative of presenting to ecclesiastical benefices of the first order, and of regulating the reformed Teutonic knights: he is besides the visitor

\* These *Grieteneyen* were about three years ago, on the breaking out of the present troubles, unconstitutionally abolished. If the Orange party triumph, there is no doubt of their being put on their former footing.

of



of the universities of Utrecht, Leyden, and Harderwyck.

Having thus concisely related the power and the authority of the Prince of Orange in the commonwealth, as well as his title, his duties, and his prerogatives, in his several political and individual capacities, we now come to treat of the revenues which he possesses to maintain his dignity, or to preserve his weight in the state.

But on this head it must be allowed that it is much easier to lament the want of authentic information, than to describe with accuracy the different sources and funds from which his finances are derived: these are various and numerous; his principalities in Germany; his patrimonial possessions in the Netherlands; actions in the East-India company and other public funds; the stated emoluments of the several offices which he fills; the settlements made on him by the provincial and other constitutional assemblies on his succeeding to the government; the produce of his fiscal prerogatives;

rogatives; are but a part of the many sources of his revenue: but even these are, through jealous precaution, or judicious policy, so enveloped in obscurity, that for a foreigner to ascertain with any precision what the receipts from them may have amounted to at any particular period, would be extremely difficult.

Conjectural estimates of the wealth of princes, nations, and even of private individuals, are in general loose, vague, and incorrect; even where there is neither intention to mislead nor interest to deceive, they are commonly exaggerated: but when they are given in support of particular systems, or adduced as proofs of certain political theories, or offered as inducements to the exercise of violence or the depredations of avarice, they become so in a manner far above the usual measure of credibility.

From a variety of different and combined circumstances, of which the detail would be here displaced, there is however good reason to conjecture, without risking exaggeration, that in the year 1766, on the Prince's



Prince's becoming of age, he enjoyed an annual revenue of about two millions of guilders current money of Holland, or about one hundred and eighty-two thousand pounds sterling.

This sum is, properly and accurately speaking, the whole of the Prince's revenue in his own distinct, political, and individual capacity; and it is entirely separate and different from the revenue of the state, as well as from that part of the public contributions which is applied to the payment of the public creditors: with it are defrayed all the charges that attend the civil government and the military establishment of his hereditary dominions in Germany; his quotas to the empire; the maintenance of the Princesses; the expences of the household; the salaries of his servants; the appointments of his courtiers; and the sums assigned for the privy purse, secret service money, bounties, pensions, charities, &c.

When all these great and numerous outgoings are considered without prejudice or passion, it will not appear surprising, that these

these revenues, considerable as they are, should have been sometimes found not fully adequate to answer all the demands that the support of the dignity, and the preservation of the political weight of the house of Orange in the commonwealth rendered it necessary to make on them; and that hence, that family has been on certain occasions, that occurred more than once, incumbered with debts which it was difficult, if not impossible, to liquidate completely, without having recourse to extraordinary, and those sometimes very disagreeable, or at least unpopular means\*

\* When the late Prince of Orange died, the revenues of his family were not so considerable, and they were besides extremely incumbered; but by peace and œconomy both public and domestic, during a long minority (fifteen years, from the year 1751 to the year 1766), the revenue was greatly improved, and the greatest part of the debt was paid off; so that when the present Stadtholder came of age, there is the best reason to suppose, that he was in the clear receipt of two millions of guilders annually. How the present distracted state of affairs in the republic must affect his revenue, may be more easily imagined than described.



## S E C T I O N VI.

**I**T has been observed in a former section of this discourse, that whatever the rights of the Prince of Orange may be in the Dutch republic, the circumstances on which they are supported are reducible to three heads: 1st. Power, founded on force and opinion; — 2dly. Authority, derived from law or prescription; — 3dly. Influence, acquired by money, by patronage, and by habit. Of these three heads two have been already spoken of; and now it remains to treat of influence, the third of them.

There are in the internal administration of every country many important circumstances which seem to be the result rather of general and contingent causes, than the

immediate consequence of arbitrary power or positive institution.

The instruments of the first, if openly employed, are violent and unpopular; and those of the second are so circumscribed by express law as on many occasions not to be applicable to the ends of government; for in governing large bodies of men, difficulties, hard to solve legally or to remove by statutes, will frequently arise even in the pursuit of the most rational and equitable principles. The rules are numerous and complicated, the branches various, the objects fluctuating, the purposes sometimes contingent, and the events often unforeseen or unknown; so that it becomes impossible, on many occasions, to judge by positive institutions of the utility of the purposes, or of the propriety of the measures, or of the sufficiency of the powers; because, express or positive institutions are fixed rules of action for men, supposed to live in an immutable state of society, and in a permanent order of things, and can seldom with pro-



priety be applied to regulate objects or relations that are continually varying and perpetually in motion. Hence has arisen a necessity in all states, in which even the shadow of liberty is preserved, of devising an instrument of rule less liable than these to violence, unpopularity, inconvenience, and jealous or insidious reflections, without its being any thing the weaker on that account. This desirable instrument of government was found in influence, management, expedient; and by these the Prince Stadtholder has generally maintained his rights and directed his administration in the Dutch commonwealth, more than by power or authority.

The acceptance of measures with the supreme legislatures of the republic was negotiated before they were offered; concert appeared; men were governed according to their humour, because they were governed according to their interest; and the private advantage of such individuals as had a share in the legislative power being combined with  
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the personal interest of the Prince and the public prosperity of the state, all the operations of the government went on smoothly. To conduct public business in this manner, without connecting individual with general interest, would have been impossible among such a people as the Dutch ; for they know so little of that disinterested public spirit, which loses sight of personal advantage in a regard for the good of the state, that the very wisest and best among them are very frequently apt to consider it as the idle theory of mere speculative minds.

However this may be, it seems indisputable, that influence has been at most times the great engine of the Stadtholder's government in the Dutch commonwealth ; and the want of proper skill or of proper ministers to manage it, may be considered as a cause of the present ill condition of the affairs of the Prince of Orange in the republic.

Before the public peace was interrupted  
P 3 by



by the dissensions which now unhappily distract that state, this influence was of three kinds, according to the sources from which it was derived, or the objects to which it was applied; legislative influence, popular influence, and official influence. These three kinds of influence were reduced into a regular system, not indeed professed upon principle, though adopted in fact. For the sake of clearness and accuracy each of them shall be separately spoken of: in favour of precision, what may perhaps appear an affectation of pedantry will be excused; and that which is called *legislative influence* shall be first treated of distinctly.

By *legislative influence*, is here understood the influence which was exercised or possessed in the senates (*vrootschaps*) of the cities, and the assemblies of the states in the provinces, which are the supreme legislatures of the commonwealth. An interest in the towns, extensive connections, skill in management, knowledge in public business, and above all things, money and patronage,

pro-

produced it. While the temper of the people determined the character of the legislatures, popular influence and this were the same.

But when the constitution of the towns came to be totally aristocratical, and the *vrootfchaps* (senates) sent representatives to the provincial states, dependent on themselves, and little connected with the people, the legislatures were seen to act sometimes against the declared sense of the nation, and the influence that operated upon them came to be considered and called *legislative influence*, in contradistinction to *popular influence*.

From what has been said in the preceding sections, of the constitution of the republic, it is sufficiently obvious, that without possessing this influence in a high degree it was absolutely impossible for the leaders of any party to conduct public business at all; for the government could not move a single step while the legislatures in the provinces either disapproved of measures or disliked



the persons employed to carry them into execution.

Nor could it be effectually conducted, even in ordinary or common cases, by such a feeble majority as might be defeated by the defection of a few towns, or the falling off and the negation of the smaller, and poorer, and weaker provinces. Such a large and decisive majority as might in a manner impose on itself, and through the polity it taught, or the sympathy it communicated, or the fear it inspired, might induce such members of the confederacy as were inclined to dissent from its resolutions, to join in at least simulated unanimity, could alone do it in a legal, satisfactory, and constitutional manner.

To procure this, various acts were employed; and the judicious management and application of these acts may be well numbered among the highest strains of a Dutch minister's policy; a policy in which the grand pensionary, *John de Wit*, far surpassed any  
one

one that either went before or came after him.

Staunch deputies, such as might be with safety depended upon, were procured to be sent to the provincial states by the inferior towns which were absolutely at the disposal of the Orange family: the prospect of employments was held forth in the other cities; the secret service money was distributed; and if, nevertheless, majorities still continued inconsiderable or indecisive, negotiations were set on foot which never failed to produce very powerful and conspicuous effects even when they proved abortive. They fixed the longing eyes of men on the offices of state; they rendered the measures of the opposing party temporising, irregular, and timid: the politics of all men were warped by the objects which they had in view, and every one feared to shut against himself the half-open door of preferment. Sometimes too places were held for a long time undisposed of, from the necessity of keeping men in hopes, or from the danger of disobliging those



those who must remain unprovided for. By holding offices thus unappointed to, expectation lay, as it were, in common, and a great number of expectants were kept in order, who thought they had ground for hope while any thing remained to be given away.

Thus the choice of deputies, and their conduct when chosen, were influenced; men who were unqualified for any office or employment were bribed with money; those who had places were biaſſed by the dread of loſing what they enjoyed; those who had none were led on by hope; and by various changes which an able man might artfully introduce into the forms of deliberation in the aſſemblies, and by modifications of the matters diſcuſſed in them, the friends of the Prince, till of late, uſually acquired the abſolute direction of the ſeveral ſtates in the republic: fears, expectations, ſkilful management, open bribery, and immediate dependence, kept moſt of the members of them attached to his intereſt.

Of theſe members, his chief miniſters had  
always

always some confidential ones who regularly met them to receive instructions, and to be informed of what was resolved on. With these men they consulted in what method to proceed in disposing public business, so as to determine the assemblies sometimes to propose measures, and sometimes to agree to the propositions that were made to them. Parts were assigned to each of them, and they assigned second parts to other men whom they found willing to concur in what was desired.

In this manner, and by all these means, the Stadtholder, while politic management was employed, had the direction of the states in all the provinces of the republic, and their meetings were in general declaratory of his will, though in the shape of deliberation and debate.

The chief persons to whom the conduct and arrangement of this business were usually committed by him, were, *the Greffier*, and *the Grand Pensionary*; and while these

two



two great officers of state were firmly attached to his interest, and on good terms with each other, things were smoothly and successfully managed. But if they disagreed, or pursued different interests, or entertained different views, or were disaffected to the Orange party, the assemblies of the states were sometimes found to be adverse to the measures of the Prince: this has unfortunately been the case for several years past, as may be perceived by a view of the characters of these two ministers.

*M. Fagel, the Greffier*, is the head of a family in which one or other of the two great ministerial offices of the republic (that of *Grand Pensionary*, and that of *Greffier*) has been, with little interruption, in a manner hereditary, ever since the death of *John de Wit*. He resumed the office which he now fills in administration, and which in some measure corresponds to that of secretary of state among us, on the death of his son, in whose favour he had resigned it some years ago, so that he may be well presumed to be

be far advanced in age. He is certainly a man of great experience, better acquainted than any one with the true interests and real state of the commonwealth, and of all those in the interest of the Prince of Orange, the most capable of acting a great part without danger of miscarriage, or risque of disgrace. He is a man of counsel and dispatch, perfectly acquainted with business, of the soundest judgment, a punctual observer of his word, and entirely free from *diffimulation*, the ordinary quality of ministers of state. He is a friend to men or measures with sincerity, and an enemy without disguise; a peculiarity in his character which has sometimes led him into inconveniences; for his freedom and plainness have been, on more than one occasion, ill taken, and have raised him many enemies; yet the general wisdom and integrity of his conduct continually added to his fame, and rendered him one of the most considerable leaders of his party. He has been ever esteemed violent against the republicans, but at the same time he lived on familiar terms with



with several of their leaders, and treated all of them courteously, without however concealing from them his sentiments of their principles and designs. Notwithstanding his years, he has a perfect use of all the powers of mind that adorned his earlier age. He has a great stock of knowledge, a memory retentive of all that was ever committed to it, and a strong understanding constantly exercised on public affairs. There were however at all times certain singularities in his manner and character, that have been seldom found in a great man. He has the utmost contempt for polite literature, and a total disregard for all those ceremonious forms which society has wisely adopted to restrain the petulance of some, and to conceal the deficiencies of others. His manner is stiff, his address ungraceful, and his conversation, though abounding in weight, argument and knowledge, extremely unpleasing; for his language appears labour-ed, and his diction not only inelegant, but often vulgar, ungrammatical and corrupt. His sincerity was ever too bluntly expressed  
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to be agreeable, in so much that even the Prince was more than once disgusted with it; for though it is indisputable that *the Greffier* was always firmly attached to the interests of the house of Orange, as his ancestors had ever uniformly been, yet he failed not to represent the pernicious tendency of the Duke of Brunswic's counsels in the plainest terms, and in a manner which was considered at court neither deferent nor becoming in a minister of state to the supreme magistrate of the republic. In a word, *M. Fagel* was, even in the greatest trifles, too much of a thorough-paced Dutchman (*starch Hollander*); of which a stronger proof cannot be given, in the case of a man of his rank and quality, than that he would never wear either a full dress coat or silk stockings, circumstances of which in his convivial moments he has frequently boasted.

*M. Bleyfwick, the Grand Pensionary*, is a man of a very different character. Different in manner, in temper, in views, in principles, in conduct, in opinion, and in action.

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He is a native of the city of Delft, of the regency of which he had been long a member, and he was bred to the law, in which it is said, that had he pursued it as a profession, he would have made a distinguished figure. In the line of politics, which he has chosen to follow, his success has not been so happy; for though he may be considered as officially the prime minister of the commonwealth, he has not, through an unfortunate concurrence of circumstances, possessed the weight or influence in the state that have been usually annexed to the office which he fills; and this certainly cannot be owing either to his deficiency in knowledge, or to his want of ability; for he is learned, discerning, active, experienced, and industrious; but is rather to be imputed to the times in which he lives, and to the turn which his character has taken in them. For though indisputably a man of parts, the nature of his talents has never been such as could qualify him for executing great enterprises in a turbulent season. He is undoubtedly ambitious, and his great aim was  
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to head an independent party in the republic; but as he was never attached to the house of Orange, nor well affected to the interests of England, he did not hope to take the lead in the Stadtholder's party. On the other hand, he was not of opinion that the high republicans were the properest men to conduct public business, nor did he think that they would come into so complete a rule of management as he intended; and hence he formed a design to compose a middle party of *neuters*, which, falling in with the unengaged part of the moderate party, or *whimsicals*, would, he hoped, act according to his views, by his schemes, and under his direction; as wheels in a watch, perfectly passive, except as wound up or screwed down by the engineer, who was to be himself. But he soon found that the most considerable of the moderate party could not be brought to trust him, so that he was driven to the necessity of applying himself to the least violent of the republicans, at the hazard of being obliged to submit in many points to their measures, in-



stead of having them comply with his opinions. But even these he found less ready to fall in with him, at least upon general terms of subordination to him, than he expected; for their interest and their views being very different from his, their plans were inconsistent with the projects which he had formed, and his *neutral* schemes were rejected by them as visionary and impracticable. It was not, however, easy to determine him, whose characteristic is a predilection for his own measures and opinions, to change his sentiments, or to enter into new resolutions foreign to his own original purposes, so that until an alteration in his mind had been insensibly produced by the course of events, the general tenor of his public conduct was not only wavering and inconsistent, but on some occasions weak, irregular and absurd. And hence it seems to be, that neither his authority nor his influence in the commonwealth were so operative, or so much respected, as those of his predecessors had been in tranquil times. For being forced by circumstances

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to act inconsistently with principles and opinions which, through reason, prejudice, or obstinacy, he would neither alter nor forsake, his conduct was necessarily vague and indecisive, as that of every man must be, whose sentiments and practice are in direct opposition to each other. He perceived justly, and at one view, the evils and the advantages attending the measures and the designs of the two great contending parties, but he did not weigh and compare these evils and these advantages with sufficient precision, so that what one day struck him as the most serious and important, appeared the next in his eyes trifling and inconsiderable; and this too was a cause of his wavering and indecision; which, though it does little honour to his views, or rather to his resolution, fully clears up the purity of his intentions. These were certainly at all times the best, in his judgment, that could be towards the commonwealth. For though there is no doubt that desire of being the head of a party, and supreme arbiter in the state, had very powerful influence on



his politics, yet these views did not prevail with him over other considerations. The first idea with which he was struck, was the glory of being the preserver of the constitution of his country; and his second wish, to have the exclusive honour of preventing its dissensions, or of restoring its tranquillity. *The Grand Pensionary* is in other respects a worthy, respectable and distinguished character, with more urbanity of mind and of manners than can be commonly met with among the Dutch: had he lived in better times, he would most probably have been classed with old *Fagel*, *Heinsius*, and *Slingelandt*, the honestest and ablest ministers that preceded him in office since the revocation of the perpetual edict in the last century; but as the age is, he, as well as many others, though a great man, is inconsiderable; for men may derive rank from birth, and dignity from office, but their consequence they must owe entirely to themselves, independent of the accidental advantages of family and employment.

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These circumstances in the characters and views of *M.M. Fagel* and *Bleyfwyck*, rendered it almost impossible for them to act vigorously in concert, or to co-operate in modelling the assemblies of the states, or in conducting the Stadtholder's business in them. So that while matters were trusted to them alone, it was sufficiently obvious that the Prince's friends wanted strength and efficiency to carry on proper measures with success. To give them that strength and solidity, and to prevent the mischiefs inseparable from a weak, unsettled and divided government, another person of great weight in the commonwealth was taken into a share of the management of the legislative influence of the Stadtholder.

This person was the *Baron Booteslaer*, chief of one of the most ancient and illustrious families in the republic. He had been long at the head of the equestrian order of Holland, and their representative in the assembly of the states of that province, by whom he was commonly deputed among

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those who represent them in the assembly of the States General, the supreme senate of the commonwealth. He was a nobleman of great mildness and generosity of temper, fond, above most of his countrymen, of a splendid manner of living, and extremely addicted even in an advanced age to rural sports; all which circumstances contributed to impair considerably a fair fortune, which he inherited from his ancestors. Though his family had been among the most violent of the high republican party, in so much that in the year 1723, when *M. Slingelandt* proposed to the States to treat amicably with the Prince of Orange, and settle the stadtholdership in his family, under strict limitations, and with effectual provisions for the public liberty, the *Booteslaers* were the first to take alarm at the proposition, and finally determined the rejection of it; yet he, early in life, laid aside his hereditary prejudices, and turned to the Orange party, whose cause he espoused with all the zeal and eagerness of a proselyte. These sentiments were confirmed as he ad-

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vanced in life, by the treatment which he received from the court at the Hague, who conferred upon him every thing either in office, or in distinction, that was best worth his acceptance, or that it was in their power to bestow. Even after he had grown grey in business, and had long shared in the government of the commonwealth, he was entirely directed by his wife, and she was as absolutely governed by the English ambassador, with whom she had almost from her youth been connected by the most honourable and disinterested friendship. So that the whole family, of which she was the oracle, as well as the *gouvernante*, were as entirely devoted to the British interest (and of course to the house of Orange), as the most zealous patriot in our senate, or our cabinet. And indeed it must be admitted, that *this lady* in every stage of life possessed more than a common share of those powers and personal accomplishments employed by her sex to influence, to persuade, or to govern. In her youth she was distinguished by her wit, her sentiment, and



her beauty ; at a more advanced period she was not less remarkable for her penetration, her taste, and her good sense ; in her declining years, when time usually destroys all the amiable qualities which appeared so pleasing and so captivating in the flower of age, her good-nature, her sweetness of temper, and her knowledge of the world were admired by all those who were acquainted with her ; and though her merits inspired much envy, and her fortune raised her many rivals, she has had the singular felicity of having hitherto passed through life without any one's ever questioning her honour, her delicacy, or her virtue.

In such a constitution as that established in the republic of the United Provinces, the foreign ministers of those powers who are most intimately connected with the state may, if they be men of ability, acquire considerable influence in managing the legislatures. They have even on some occasions acted openly to procure the nomination of such magistrates in the towns, or the appointment

ment of such deputies to be sent to the states, as they thought were well disposed to their court or party; and by their interest, or that of their principals, the resolutions in the assemblies have been frequently determined.\* From this peculiarity

\* See *Les Memoires du Comte D'Avaux, Le Negotiation du Marechal D'Estrades*, and *Sir William Temple's Letters*, *passim*.—D'Estrades had such an ascendant there at one time, that (as he writes to Louis XIV. his master) on finding a great many members of the states prepossessed against his party, he thought fit to separate them, on some pretexts, for a few days, that he might have time to efface the unfavourable impressions left on their minds by the party in opposition to him. At another time he writes, that when the election of magistrates in the cities of Holland came on, he went from town to town to support the interest of the Louvestein faction, and of *John de Wit*, who was then at the head of it, and blindly devoted to the court of France. While the Pensionary was on board the fleet, in the first English war after the Restoration, some of the greatest men in the republic threw up their offices, because they would not serve with him; on which occasion the French ambassador went round to persuade them not to resign at that time, because it would be prejudicial to the interest of his party. This interference



liarity in the frame of the commonwealth, and from the particular situation of *Sir Joseph Yorke* while he resided in a public character at the Hague, he may be well considered as one of the great managers of the influence of the Prince of Orange in the legislatures of the state; and certainly it cannot be denied, that, as to capacity, he was highly qualified to act a part of this kind. Few men had greater talents for business, and no one was a greater master of the arts by which the Dutch are to be influenced or led, than this ambassador. He had industry, activity, and penetration. He deliberated with skill, he determined with judgment, he planned with foresight, he directed with aptitude, sagacity, and discernment. He was subtle, insinuating, plausible, and profound. Though bred to the army, a profession in which a relish for a science of this kind is seldom acquired,

ference of foreign ministers is still practised, of which, were it not invidious, many recent instances might be here given: the above may shew to what extent it is sometimes carried.

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he was most perfectly acquainted with the legal constitution of the republic. His knowledge of its interests, its relations, its general politics, its finances, its commerce, its manufactures, its internal police, with all their divisions and subdivisions, was vast and multifarious. His manners and his generosity rendered him deservedly popular, and even his public adversaries esteemed him so much for the virtues of his character, that most of them wished to become his personal friends. With all these superior advantages of popularity and rank, as well as of ability and knowledge, he was without doubt possessed of great credit with the Stadtholder, and had a great share in the management of his affairs. But there were untoward circumstances that defeated the effects of his most salutary counsels, and rendered the issue of them unequal to his expectation or his character. *First*, Several of the most considerable of the Orange party were men of feeble and timid minds, with whom procrastination was the favourite resource, and who considered the  
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use of dilatory and ambiguous measures as the most admirable efforts of consummate prudence. These rejected as impracticable every proposal that he made, if it exceeded the measure of their narrow spirit or limited capacity. *Secondly*, The Duke of Brunswic, who had acquired an absolute ascendant over the Stadtholder, was rather a crafty than an able minister ; and, as men of that character usually do, he was always substituting the cunning of temporary expedients to the wise and vigorous maxims of general policy. *Lastly*, The temper of the Prince himself contributed to impede the success of the measures advised by the English ambassador to support and to manage his influence in the legislatures of the commonwealth ; for he soon found it impossible to infuse into his indolent character, that masculine and independent principle of action, which renders the laborious direction of the operations of government, not only a pleasure, but in some measure a necessary essential to the happiness, and almost to the existence of a great statesman.

statesman, Of this high and vigorous spirit the *Princess of Orange* possesses a much greater share than her consort, and accordingly she has long taken an active part in conducting, or at least in directing by her advice, the Stadtholder's business in the states; and for this, so far as genius without experience can go, she is certainly well qualified, for she possesses in an eminent degree that natural good sense, and quick intuitive sagacity, by which the family of Brandenburg has been long distinguished; and as she has neither spared pains to refine them by study, nor wanted talents to improve them by observation, her knowledge and capacity are far superior to those, which generally fall to the lot of persons of her rank and sex. But as the measures of policy must necessarily submit to the various accidents of circumstance and character, the greatest genius upon earth, if unpractised in business, will often be perplexed in the application of the most perfect theory, of which her Royal Highness is by this time fully convinced. She is more graceful in  
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her deportment than beautiful in her person, though it cannot be said that she is destitute of beauty; and she is more engaging by the easiness of her manners, than by the fallies of her wit, which, either from temper or habit, has sometimes taken perhaps too severe a turn; a circumstance that in one of her high station had the appearance, and produced some of the effects of ill nature. She had however, as was said of the *old Duchess de Luynes*, such brilliant flashes of that kind of vivacity as were extremely striking, and she managed them at certain times with so much judgment, that the greatest men in any age might have admired her: that merit, however, it must be allowed, was but occasional in her. She is more forgetful of benefits than of injuries, more interested than liberal, and in her general conduct, even in domestic life, much more politic and reserved than candid or sincere; in other respects an amiable woman, a good wife, and a tender mother. On the whole she is indisputably a princess of great spirit, sense and genius; possessed  
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of wit, penetration, and great personal as well as intellectual accomplishments; and one who would have made a very powerful impression on the minds and manners of any people less obstinate, wayward, and insensible than the Dutch.

These, together with *the Duke Louis of Brunswic*, formed the cabinet council, as it were, of the Stadtholder, at least in what related to the management of his influence, and the conduct of his interests in the provincial and general assemblies of the States. Other persons there were of a second, or even of a third rank, who were doubtless very useful and active in carrying on his business; such were the *Bigots* of Friesland, *Van Citters* and *Husseyens* of Zealand, the *Hopes* of Amsterdam, and other persons in these and the other provinces. But to dwell on their principles, their particular views, or their characters, is in this place unnecessary; and so much has been already said, in a former section, of the *Duke's*, that it is almost needless to say any thing  
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of him here. We shall then only add, that he has undoubtedly a good, plain, sound understanding, but no share of what is commonly called *parts*, no brightness, no splendour, nothing shining or brilliant in his genius. He is a man of approved valour, and great experience. He is artful, curious, vigilant, inquisitive, intriguing, suspicious, and insinuating; a master of dissimulation, an admirer of simulation, not indifferent to money, and a professed contemner of forms, sincerity, and the natural rights of freemen.

From this view of the characters and principles of these persons, it is clear that such complicated machines as the legislatures in the commonwealth could not, considering the situation of affairs in the year 1777, and the tempers of men at that time, be kept steadily in harmony with the Prince and with each other for any long term. For in persons with objects and interests so different, it was impossible that there should  
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ever be such a coincidence in opinion, as to produce that vigour and unanimity of counsel which was necessary at such a period for the regular conduct of public affairs. *The Greffier* and the *Baron Booteslaer* wished to support the influence of the Prince in the legislatures on a high scale, but not farther than, according to their notions, the constitution allowed; *the Princess*, who naturally wished the aggrandizement of her family, and did not probably learn, in such a school as the court of Berlin, to be very scrupulous in the means she employed, would have willingly extended the influence of her husband some degrees farther; *the Grand Pensionary* wished at bottom to destroy it entirely, and on the ruins of it to erect what he considered as the edifice of his own grandeur, to head an independent party, and to become supreme arbiter of the commonwealth; *Sir Joseph Yorke*, it may be reasonably presumed, endeavoured to make it subservient to the interests of his country; and *the Duke of Brunswic*, without a doubt, desired to combine it with



private and personal considerations, all centring in himself; and as for the Stadtholder, he does not possess that superior strength of mind and extent of abilities, which are capable of rendering a man a point of union to persons of different sentiments and discordant interests; nor has he either the talents or the spirit, necessary to form and to execute great or complex political schemes by himself, and without the assistance of others of more genius and vigour.

The republican party clearly perceived what the true state of affairs was, as well as the advantages that might be made of it to depress their great rivals, or at least to weaken them so far, as to share in the administration with them; and Amsterdam, as usual, took the lead. This city was at that time (in the year 1777) in a manner absolutely governed by *M. Van Tamine*, the oldest of the burgomasters, a man of low birth, mean education, and moderate fortune.

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By being one of the ostensible leaders of the republican party, this magistrate acquired a degree of weight, distinction, and fame in the commonwealth, greatly superior to his talents or his deserts. His knowledge was extremely limited, for he was almost illiterate, and at eighty years old, age had added little to his experience; so that it was scarce possible to find in any civilized country a man of his station, and who has made such a figure, that knew less of men or of things, of books, of business, or of the world than he. His capacity was not more extensive than his learning; and his manner, language, and address were still inferior to both; but his integrity, his boldness, his zeal for the cause which he had espoused, compensated amply in the opinion of his party for all the deficiencies of his character; and it cannot be doubted that he possessed all these qualities in an eminent degree: he sought what he considered to be the good of the republic preferably to all things, even to the interests of his own family, though it has been said



that he carried his attachment to his own family farther than was becoming in a magistrate. In boldness and intrepidity he was equal to any man, and this spirit in one of his age and profession on some occasions produced singular effects. It certainly furnished him with more than ordinary powers of oratory; a kind of eloquence entirely peculiar to himself. He knew nothing of rhetorical figures, of elegance of diction, or of propriety of expression, and very little of common grammar; there was nothing congruous, argumentative, or methodical in his speeches; his language was vulgar and barbarous; but he spoke with an energy which frequently in some measure supplied the want of these qualities, and his discourses, though they shocked the ear, seized upon the mind. His zeal for his party, and his hatred of England and the house of Orange, were still greater than either his boldness or his honesty; and though he was frequently carried, by the violence of these sentiments, beyond the bounds not only of decency, but

but of prudence; yet his very excesses contributed to increase his popularity, and, joined to his manner of talking and thinking, which was in general exactly like that of the very lowest of the people of Amsterdam, rendered him the idol of the vulgar republicans. He was, on the whole, a plain, honest Dutchman, of narrow intellect and uncultivated mind; vain, bold, artless, ignorant, stubborn, and presumptuous.

Whoever considers the nature of factions, and the conduct by which they are to be formed or managed, will readily perceive that it required qualities very different from those which this gentleman possessed, to make a figure long as a party leader. No character in life demands more extensive talents, or more various acquirements; for the man who assumes it undertakes to govern, without possessing any coercive authority, a number of persons who conceive themselves and him to be on terms of perfect equality, so that their obedience is voluntary,



luntary, their confidence is limited, and their minds are variously affected, according to their interests, their tempers, their prejudices, their views, their habits, and their opinions; hence it becomes necessary for him to restrain the violent, to animate the timid, to moderate the impetuous, to persuade the indifferent, to conciliate the minds of the suspicious, to calm the alarms of the jealous, to guard against the machinations of the treacherous, to repel the attacks of the hostile, and to lead on all his party to concur in measures that conduce to the attainment of the great end which he proposes to himself. The command of an army, or the government of an empire, does not require greater ability or more shining parts. Sometimes it happens that a favourable concurrence of circumstances gives a fortuitous ascendant to a mean individual, and certain peculiarities of character may enable him to preserve it for a while; but such an influence is transitory and precarious, liable to be overturned by accident, and to be destroyed by time. This the *burgomaster*

*Tamine* would have experienced long before his death, had not his measures to weaken or annihilate the influence of the Prince of Orange in the legislatures of the republic been enforced by the gold of France, and directed by the counsels of a man possessed of knowledge and talents infinitely superior to his.

The man to whom allusion is had on this occasion in this place, is *M. Van Berkel*, first pensionary of the city of Amsterdam.

Few men in any country had a deeper knowledge of business, or a sounder judgment than this gentleman possesses, and there was no one in the seven provinces who observed so accurately political causes with their effects, or who took so clear and comprehensive a view of the revolutions prepared by both, as he did. He is active, versatile, laborious, and discerning, possessed of a genius capable of forming and executing great and uncommon designs, intimately acquainted with the constitution and true



interests of the republic, and of a spirit in the pursuit of his ends, that can be neither cooled by delays nor damped by disappointment. But, as it is beyond doubt, that he has ever been as corrupt a man as any that the present age has produced, his conduct, notwithstanding all his great qualities, was always much more directed to his own private advantage, than to the good of his country. Under the pretence of principle, and the umbrage of patriotism, he pursued such measures as he supposed would conduce most to his personal interest. This he entirely centred in one point, *the acquisition of the office of Greffier*, which has been long the great object of his ambition. He is desirous of power; not less fond of money; and, in his pursuit of either, he has never been much restrained by the principles of honour, or a regard to virtue. To obtain this employment in the ministry, which is indisputably the most lucrative in the state, and would be rendered still more so to him, by his mode of managing the secret service money, he attached himself to the *burgomaster*

*master Tamine*, of whom he readily acquired the confidence as well as government; and by driving him on desperate measures, and inflaming him against all the Orange party, but more particularly against the Duke of Brunswic, the most unpopular of them all, he expected that he himself should become so considerable in the commonwealth, as to attain, without any great difficulty, to the object of his wishes. Thus the *burgomaster* was merely an instrument in the hands of the *first pensionary*, who managed him as he judged most expedient for his own purposes: and, by a singular piece of good fortune which *M. Van Berkel* experienced, this his instrument was first magistrate of the first city in the republic, above eighty years old, of the most venerable aspect, of the most popular appearance, speaking the dialect of the very lowest of the citizens among whom he presided, and entertaining the prejudices and opinions of the populace; all circumstances of unaccountable weight in popular factions, and by which the minds even of sensible men

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are, on some occasions, affected in an incredible manner.

The advanced age of *M. Van Tamine* rendered the success of all the measures immediately dependant on his personal interference and exertion, at best, precarious: of this *M. Van Berkel* was perfectly sensible, and he took precautions to provide against the evil consequences that might arise to his projects from the decease of this old republican, by fixing on a person subservient to his own views, to succeed as ostensible leader of the party.

For this post he designed *the burgo-master Haslaar*.

This gentleman is a violent, or rather fierce republican, and has been always as much attached to the French interest, and always seemed as zealous for the success of the French monarch, as any courtier at Versailles could be: his talents are by no means extensive, and his knowledge is as limited as his capacity, but he has much greater  
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urbanity of manners, and more the address of a man conversant in the polite world, than is usually to be met with in the citizens of Amsterdam; his conversation too is more spirited, ingenious, and agreeable, than that of most of his countrymen; for by living a good deal in the society of *professor Cras*, a man of taste, learning, and politeness, he acquired some of the habits and manner of that accomplished person. He is vain, artful, designing, and supercilious; open to flattery, desirous of fame, and above all measure a lover of money. He knows very little of the constitution, and still less of the true interests of his country, and he is equally ignorant of every part of public business, and equally destitute of all the talents and acquirements which qualify a man to conduct it with success: but being a great master of certain low, cajoling arts peculiar to himself, and well suited to the genius and temper of the people of Amsterdam, being a plausible speaker, a great trotter of horses\*, a great smoaker of tobacco,

\* Those who signalize themselves upon the turf in Holland,



co, a great drinker, and very violent, or rather furious against England and the house of Orange; he was very popular in that city, and in great credit with *M. Tamine*.

Such was the person designed by *M. Van Berkel* to occupy the place of ostensible chief of the republicans, in case of the death of the first burgomaster.

But in order to strengthen himself, and to provide against the inconveniences that might be occasioned to his interest and to his party, by death or defection, he gave him, as an associate, a man not destitute of ability, in whom he could fully confide. This man was *M. Rendorp*, who is also a burgomaster of Amsterdam, a man not unacquainted with business, nor ignorant of the

Holland, do it by keeping the best trotting horses, as we do here by the fleetness of ours. The Dutch make matches between *trotters* for five hundred and a thousand ducats. This is a very popular amusement at Amsterdam and in the neighbourhood, and some of the leading men follow it as much through motives of policy, as from inclination or for pleasure.

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constitution of the commonwealth, and who possesses some qualities that fit him well for active life; steadiness, perseverance, discernment, and an extensive knowledge of mankind. Though he cannot be reckoned among the most violent of the high republicans, he was entirely disaffected to the house of Orange and the British interests, and as blindly attached to France as any man of his party; yet he was never very popular, and why he was not it may be very difficult to say, unless it be that the possession of some one very trifling quality, or the defect in some other, will extremely damp the favour of the people, and occasion the loss, or prevent the acquisition of popularity: however, through the want of it, he was reduced to act a second part, under men far inferior to himself in every point that constitutes a man of business.

But neither the zeal and popularity of *Tamine*, nor the arts and address of *Haslaar*, nor the practical talents of *Rendorp*, nor  
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the knowledge and ability of *Van Berkel*, could have operated so powerfully to diminish the influence of the Prince of Orange in the legislatures of the republic, had they not been from the beginning supported by the emissaries and the money of France.

*The Comte de Vergennes* \* had never been, from the beginning of the American war, without confidential persons in the United Provinces, who were vigilant upon every occasion to give him a true state of public affairs, and to forward the designs of the French court in the commonwealth, which all tended to depress the Orange party, to destroy the legislative influence of the Prince, and to detach the republic entirely from the interests of Great Britain.

These emissaries of France were of all

\* The French king's secretary of state for foreign affairs, one of the ablest ministers and honestest men of his time. He died, sincerely and universally lamented, last February, after having been successively ambassador at Constantinople, and in Sweden, and near thirteen years in the administration at home.

ranks,

ranks, from the *Chevalier de Luxemburg*\*, and the Marquis de Louvois†, down to the editor of the Leyden Gazette, and that wretch so well known at the Hague by the appellation of Don Quixote‡, and so remarkable

\* A nobleman of one of the first families in France, a lord of the bed-chamber to the King (*premier gentilhomme de la chambre du Roy*), and in some degree a favourite. He was a good deal at *Amsterdam*, partly through political motives, and partly led by gentler causes, for he was very much taken with Mrs. R. the wife of an English merchant in that city, a lady who is a native of Geneva, and possesses great beauty and merit. Perhaps this nobleman, like several of his countrymen, combined gallantry with politics.

† The *Marquis de Louvois* is nephew to the late *Mareschal d'Etrées*, and grandson to the famous *Marquis de Louvois*, the minister and favourite of Louis XIV. He married, for her money, an old, ugly, ill-bred woman of Friesland, of a noble family, and possessed of a large fortune, which of course gave them influence in that province, which influence he employed as much as he could against the Stadtholder, in order to make his peace at court, where he was for some time in a kind of disgrace, though without being exiled.

‡ This man is a pensioner of France, and one of those who was suspected of dispersing and composing libels  
against



markable for his noisy contests in coffee-houses with those whom he thought were attached to the British interest, particularly with *Pinto*, the Jew pensioner of England†. But most of them were too obscure, and their manœuvres too uninteresting to be dwelt on in this place. The character, story, and measures of the French ambassador were, however, very different, and

against the Prince and Princess of Orange. His headquarters, from whence he retailed his abuse, was *Opdenhoff's Coffee-house*, in the *Plain* at the Hague.

† *Pinto*, though a Jew, is a liberal-minded, ingenious man, and a scholar. He published some literary pieces in the French language, that have considerable merit; but by far the most valuable (at least he found it so) of all his compositions has never been printed. This is a manuscript memorial, which he presented to the late Duke of Bedford, then ambassador at Paris to negotiate the peace of 1763. The subject of this memorial was the demarkation of the limits of our East-India Company's territories, and it pleased the Duke and the Company so well, that the Court of Directors settled five hundred pounds a year upon him for life. He is very lame, and very deformed, and hence he is sometimes called *Le Diable Boiteux*. His pension makes him entirely English as to politics. He is of *Sofia's* mind, *Que le vrai Amphitrion est celui ou l'on dine.*

deserve

deserve to be more particularly entered upon than most of those that have been hitherto spoken of: because there is no doubt, that, next to *M. Van Berkel*, no man contributed so much to destroy the influence of the Stadtholder in the legislatures of the commonwealth, as he did by the measures which he adopted or advised.

This ambassador's name was *Paul Francis de Quelen*, and his title was *Duke de la Vauguyon*. Towards the end of the year 1776, he succeeded the *Marquis de Noailles*, as ambassador from Louis XVI. to the States General, and soon afterwards entered upon the functions of his employment. The father of this nobleman was crafty, bigoted and superstitious, and very intimately connected with the Jesuits, to whom he was so strongly attached, that it has been said, that he was privately initiated in their order a few years before his death. Through their influence, and the politic arts for which those ecclesiastics were so eminently distinguished, he ingratiated himself with



the late Dauphin, whose favour he enjoyed while he lived. By the interest of this prince he was raised to the rank of duke and peer of France; obtained the blue ribband; procured the command of a province, and was afterwards appointed governor of the royal children, the present king and his two brothers. While he was in this situation at court, he found means, without difficulty, to place his son, the ambassador of whom we speak, near the person of the eldest of the young princes, the same who reigns at this time in quality of *Menin*, an attendant on the Heir Apparent, whose functions resemble, in some particulars, those of a lord of the bed-chamber to the sovereign; but whose office is, from the singular etiquette of the French court, much more agreeable and important; for, by the deep policy of the monarchs of France, the Dauphin is never allowed any separate establishment; he has neither revenues, nor domestics, nor houses, nor carriages, nor dogs, nor horses; he is, as it were, in a state of perpetual pupillage,  
lodged

lodged in the king's palaces, attended by the king's servants, supplied with money from the king's privy purse, and furnished with every article that contributes to gratify the luxuries, or to satisfy the necessities of life from the king's magazines, or at the king's expence. That he may, however, enjoy the pleasures of conviviality and social life, unrestrained by the forms and principles which regulate or control all the other relations of his state, he has a small but select number of noblemen of distinguished birth and character, and of nearly the same age with himself, who, under the title of his *Menins*, and with appointments suited to their station, are in a particular manner attached to his person. It may be well supposed, that in the familiar intercourse which must in some measure necessarily subsist between the prince and these persons, frequent opportunities occur of cultivating his favour to advantage; and hence, these posts have been ever eagerly sought after by such of the courtiers at Versailles as had children or



other relatives qualified to fill them. When the old *Duke de la Vauguyon* had fixed his son, who was then known by the title of *Duke de St. Megrin*, in one of them, all the arts, and subtilty, and insinuation, of which they or their patrons the Jesuits were masters, were employed to ingratiate the *Menin* with the *Heir Apparent*. To insure the success of this great object of their policy, a person of the name of *Marchand*, on whose fidelity and attachment dependance might be had, was placed near the person of the young duke, to regulate his measures, and to direct his conduct. This man was cunning, dark, laborious and intriguing; a great dissembler; not destitute of knowledge; possessed of some taste; well acquainted with the *Belles Lettres*; in two words, a *professed Jesuit*. He had acquired some fame by a very ingenious work, which he wrote on a very extraordinary subject, *Sleep*; and he improved his reputation by his conduct abroad; but learning, industry, taste, fame, art, dissimulation, honour,

honour, and virtue itself, he made subservient to three very mean ends :

1st. To promote his personal interest, no matter how ;—2dly, To advance, or to support the credit of his order ;—and, 3dly, To gratify the ambition and the revenge, the two predominant passions of the house of *La Vauguyon*. Under the direction of this person, the Duke, at a very early age, entered into public life, and after having been a short time in the service of the young *Dauphin*, he, as is usual in France with men of his rank, went into the army. In this profession he rose rapidly, through the interest of his father, the intrigues of *Marchand*, and the patronage of the Prince ; so that before he attained to the age of three and twenty, he was colonel of a royal regiment of four battalions (the *Dauphin's* own regiment), and governor of the town, citadel, castle, and district of *Cogniac*.\* But neither nature nor educa-

\* *Cogniac* is in the S. W. part of France, and famous for Brandy.



tion fitted him for a military life, for which he had neither figure, nor inclination, nor talents ; so that having obtained the *Croix de St. Louis*, one of the chief objects of the ambition of the French nobility as well as gentry, he retired from the service, and applied himself to foreign politics, in which he made a more distinguished figure ; for after he had filled some diplomatic offices, which required more ceremony and parade than knowledge of business, or talents for negociation, he was, as has been said, appointed ambassador at the Hague, in the year 1776, before he had yet attained to the age of thirty. Previous to this period he had married a lady of a very ancient and illustrious family, and who had great wit, beauty, and good sense ; but whose merits were still superior to her fortune, her talents, or her birth, for she was virtuous, gentle, and fruitful. She, however, then filling one of the most distinguished places at court, which required her personal attendance, did not accompany the Duke in his embassy, which he entered up-

on

on attended only by *M. Berenger*, as *secrétaire de legation*, and *M. Marchand*, the ex-jesuit, of whom we have spoken, as private secretary. *M. Berenger* was a man of great steadiness, honour, and experience; much less artful, volatile, and intriguing than his countrymen generally are, and well acquainted with business, to which he had been brought up from his youth. He had been a great many years employed in the diplomatic line, and had conducted himself with exemplary prudence and discretion in several of the first courts of Europe, in which he acted in the subordinate capacity of *agent*, *secrétaire d'ambassade*, and *chargé des affaires*, particularly on some very critical occasions at *Vienna*, *Petersburg*, and *Naples*. This gentleman was considered by the French ministry, as well as by the ambassador's own friends, to be a proper and necessary counsellor for one of the Duke's youth and inexperience, on entering upon the functions of such an employment as his, in such a country as Holland, and in such circumstances as the affairs of



both Europe and America were in at that time. But whatever might have been the views of ministers, or the sentiments of friends, or the state of politics, the *Duke de la Vauguyon* was not induced by them to consider the counsels of such a secretary of embassy as *M. Berenger* as any way necessary, and he always invariably continued to entertain the most unfavourable opinion of that gentleman, and to treat him in the most unbecoming manner; a circumstance that, in more than one instance, proved prejudicial to the interests which were committed to him during his residence in Holland. However this may be, he was no sooner settled at the Hague, than he entered with great order, and no less perseverance on the great objects of his mission, which then all ultimately tended to support the republican party, and to depress the *legislative influence* of the Prince of Orange.

And in conducting business of such a nature, he had, doubtless, some qualities well calculated to produce success among the people with whom he had to deal, and  
which

which would, probably, have insured it, had not their operations been impeded by certain circumstances in his character, that rendered them inefficient. In figure and appearance he resembled a Dutch burgomaster, much more than he did a French nobleman ; but on the slightest intercourse it might be easily perceived from his manner and address, that he had spent the greatest part of his life in one of the politest courts of the world. His language was easy, elegant, and correct ; his deportment civil, and engaging ; his general knowledge superior to that of most men of his age and rank ; his retinue numerous, and his style of living magnificent. Besides, he was active, versatile, insinuating, laborious, persuasive, and in mere money concerns sufficiently disinterested. But all these exterior qualities make little permanent impression on men's minds, and produce but little solid effect on public affairs, when they are neither supported by sound sense, nor directed by virtue, in both which this noble person was eminently deficient ; for he was  
vain,



vain, rash, visionary, improvident, excursive, equally void of judgment and of experience; immoveably attached to his own plans, and the ideas on which he founded them; seldom discriminating between characters, circumstances, or conjunctures; constantly mistaking plodding for deliberation, and labour for industry; and generally too weak to form or to conduct wise plans himself, and too proud to adopt or to pursue those of others. His virtues were of much the same standard with his wisdom and ability: he was subtle, haughty, suspicious, vindictive, and extremely addicted to simulation, mystery, and dissimulation, though not always so great a master in these necessary arts, as to seize that point of them, beyond which, an able man who regards reputation, no motive whatever can induce to go.

Yet, notwithstanding all these deficiencies in his general character, he possessed such a bustling, indefatigable activity as sometimes accomplished its purposes as successfully as the most exquisite discernment or address:  
for

for in political affairs great turns are not always given by strong hands, but by lucky adaption, and at proper seasons. In his negociations, the *Comte d'Avaux* was his great master, and the model on which he endeavoured to form himself: the memoirs of that able statesman were never out of his hands; but though excellent in themselves, and indisputably the work of one of the most discerning and profound negociators that was ever employed by any court, the *Duke de la Vauguyon* was often led by them into inconveniencies; for having neither sufficient judgment to distinguish the difference of the conjunctures in which he and *D'Avaux* acted, nor sufficient penetration to discern the difference of the characters with whom they negotiated, nor sufficient experience to be well acquainted with the particular modes in which particular persons in the republic were to be persuaded, or applied to with success; he servilely imitated the examples which he found in *D'Avaux's* account of his own negociations, even in points wherein a contrary conduct



conduct would have been more effectual\*.  
Of this a thousand instances might be given;  
but

\* *D'Avaux's* intrigues with the heads of the *Lou-vestein* faction, and the regencies of *Amsterdam*, *Leyden*, *Delft*, *Haerlem*, and *Dortrecht*, are at this day well known; and his negotiations with some of the leading republicans in England during his embassy at the Hague, are now no longer doubted. With both the English and the Dutch, he treated of objects of the first magnitude, which tended to no less than a total alteration of the political state of Europe. His measures and his conduct were necessarily dark and mysterious, and the situation of affairs rendered the execution of the projects which he formed, or at least managed, not only feasible, but probable. *Sweden* was entirely at the devotion of his court; *Russia* was still immersed in her primitive barbarism; *Denmark* was dissolving in its own weakness; *the Empire* was harassed by the *Turks*; *Prussia* was not yet a kingdom; *Italy* was divided against herself; the *Spanish monarchy* was governed by a *child*, under the direction of a *woman*; *Portugal* by a lunatic; *England* by a furious, unprincipled faction; *Poland* was in its characteristic state of political debility; and the *Dutch republic* just recovering from the convulsions into which it had been thrown by the French invasion in the year 1672, and the contests of contending parties. Such a state of things justified, in some measure, the policy if not the justice of the vast designs

but professing to avoid, on this occasion,  
every thing that may have the appearance  
of

designs of Louis XIV. who had great ambition, without any virtue to restrain the sentiments which it inspired; and great resources, without any constitutional check, which could prevent his calling them forth for any purpose that his passions suggested, or that his necessities demanded.

In such a state of European politics, serving a monarch of such a character, and in such circumstances, the *Comte d'Avaux* had peculiar advantages in his negotiations, which he wanted not experience or ability to avail himself of. Far different in every respect were the situation and character of the *Duke de la Vauguyon*; he had neither the genius, nor the discernment, nor the experimental knowledge of the ambassador whose conduct he professed servilely to imitate; and the circumstances of the British empire, of the French monarchy, of the Dutch commonwealth, in short, those of all Europe, were very dissimilar during his embassy at the Hague, from those in which this quarter of the world was when the *Comte d'Avaux* represented Louis XIV. in the United Netherlands. But all this the Duke either would not consider, or could not perceive, and his conduct was on some occasions such as might be expected as the natural consequence of rashness, inexperience, and presumption. In fact it can  
be



of private anecdote, which these instances necessarily involve, they shall be here passed over in silence.

However, it is certain, that neither the real inconveniencies, nor the ridicule to which he was at times, on this account, exposed, prevented his being extremely prejudicial to the Orange party, and very instrumental in weakening the *legislative influence* of the Stadtholder. To this object he solely applied himself with steady and unwearied diligence; and when a man of even less ability than he certainly possessed, turns his attention entirely to a few objects, or to a single one, it acquires a degree of force unknown among men whose passions are dissipated, and whose exertions are enfeebled by the variety of their plans,

be scarcely imagined to what unaccountable and preposterous lengths these untoward principles were carried by him; or to what inconveniencies (and on some occasions even to what ridicule) he was exposed, by his servile imitation of examples which he found in the *Memoirs of the Comte d'Avaux*.

or the diversity of their pursuits: and to such a violent opposition to the Prince, he was determined more by motives of private pique and personal resentment, than by those derived from the general principles of sound policy or the true interests of his court, for at that juncture the true interests of his court indisputably were, *first*, to dissolve the connections of the Republic with Great Britain; and, *in the next place*, if circumstances required it, to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the States General; not with a faction or a few party leaders, but with the whole Union; with the constitutional government of the commonwealth.

But to succeed in this, in such a manner as to produce effect, without the hearty concurrence of the supreme magistrate of the commonwealth, who commanded its fleets and its armies, who shared in its counsels, and was to execute its resolutions, was obviously impracticable; for he alone could give energy to measures, render operations efficient,



efficient, and determine the action of such an intricate and delicate machine as the Dutch government, with vigour and system. This concurrence might probably have been obtained for half the money, and the movements, and the artifices, and the intrigues, that the ambassador employed to prejudice the Orange party, and to promote the interests of their great rivals the republicans.

For though it is without a doubt, that the first of these (the Orange party) was intimately connected with Great Britain, yet it is not to be presumed, that the attachment between *England* and the *Stadtholder* are from his consanguinity with the British monarch, and still less from any sentimental tenderness that these princes had for each other, but from a sense that it was their mutual interest to be united: this interest once changed or removed, the union, of which it was the principle, dissolved of course.

The true policy, then, of the *Duke de la Vauguyon*, had he consulted the interests of  
his

his country more, and listened less than he did to the voice of his passions, would have been, to have used his utmost endeavours to destroy this union, and to join closely and intimately with the Orange party, as well as with their adversaries. But he was under an influence that prevented his doing this, and he did quite the reverse; he was determined by his resentment, and he resolved to weaken the house of Orange: he therefore courted the friendship of the republican party, and neglected that of the Prince; and by his arts and misrepresentations his private pique became the pique of his sovereign and his country.

Now the origin of this pique is equally trifling and singular, and it justifies the observation, that political events are often brought about by causes which seem no way proportioned to the effects which they produce; thus it arose:

It has been said above, that this ambassador's father (the old *Duke de la Vauguyon*) was an *initiated Jesuit*, and that *M. Marchand*,



his secretary, was *a real, a professed one*. Here it may be asserted, without any violation of truth, that in spirit and in morals, he was himself as much of that order, not only as his father or his secretary, but as any man that had been admitted into it since the days of *Loyola*. But this is a subject on which it may be too invidious to dwell in this place: however, some time after he came to the Hague, there was a caricature print came out of him and *Marchand*, in which they were represented in the characters and habits of Jesuits sacrificing the reformed religion, the Seven United Provinces, and *M. Berenger*\*, to the whore of Babylon, the genius of France, and the demon of jealousy.

\* *M. Berenger* was secretary of the French embassy, and a man of great experience and integrity, but most illiberally and unjustifiably treated on all occasions by the *Duke de la Vauguyon* and his secretary *M. Marchand*. It is here to be observed, that the Duke's secretary, *Marchand de St. Hilairé*, is not to be confounded with this confidential secretary, *Marchand the Jesuit*.

This

This print was neither ill executed, nor, in the detail of its composition, was it destitute of humour; at least it seemed as to execution and design to be far superior to any thing that could proceed from the hands or the invention of a plodding, dull, Dutch tradesman. But whatever its merits might have been, it gave the highest offence to the Duke and his cabal. The medal of *Van Beuninghen*\* did not excite livelier sentiments of resentment in Louis XIV. than this print did in them. And though among us, where the frequency of satirical compositions of this kind renders their effects tran-

\* In the year 1667, Louis XIV. invaded the Austrian Netherlands, and, to stop the progress of his arms, Great Britain, Sweden, and the States General, made the *triple alliance*, which produced the peace of Aix la Chapelle, in 1668, under the mediation of the contracting parties. *Van Beuninghen* was the States' ambassador, and on his return home he had a medal struck, in which he was represented in the character of *Joshua* commanding the sun to stand still. Louis XIV. took the great luminary for his emblem, and thinking that this medal alluded to his conquests being stopped by the triple alliance, he resented it so highly as to make it a ground for invading Holland in the year 1672.



sitory and insignificant, it would have been laughed at for a day, and afterwards forgotten; yet in a country where pasquinades of this kind are not so common, it was very capable of operating powerfully on the minds of the multitude, and was long remembered with malevolence. The Duke considered the publication of this print as an injury aggravated by an insult; and his sense of interest was quickened by that of vanity or sentiment: inquiries were industriously set on foot by all the French cabal, to trace the author or the engraver, without in the end producing any clear or positive intelligence with regard to either. However, it was the general opinion, formed on what they called precedent and subsequent facts, that the *Princess of Orange* had it designed, and that the *Comte de Welden* got it engraved in London.

This, whether true or false, was implicitly believed by the Duke himself, and it inspired him with such sentiments of vengeance and resentment, the hereditary passions

sions of his family, as ever after powerfully influenced his conduct. This spirit, at first feeble and wary, moved within a narrow sphere, and made its efforts with hesitation and timidity: encouraged by success, it boldly extended its operations; in the course of its progression it continued to acquire vigour, and at length it advanced with a rapidity and force which burst through all the limits, within which honour, the dread of shame, or the fear of reproach had circumscribed its activity. *Van Berkel*, and the other leaders of the high republicans at Amsterdam, were not wanting in either arts or sagacity to cultivate these sentiments, and uniting closely with the French ambassador, they jointly concurred to destroy the *legislative influence* of the Prince of Orange.

The means which he and they employed, and the schemes which they projected to attain to this great object of their corrupt policy, were worthy of such a cause, and suited such characters: open, direct, and indecent



defiance of the legal authority of the Stadtholder; secret conspiracies against the constitution of the state, and base machinations against particular men, whose great crime with them was endeavouring to support the influence of the Prince. Measures of this kind could not fail of exciting sentiments of indignation in the breasts of all those who were attached to the Orange party, or engaged in the interests of William V. but they were carefully concealed, as is usual in courts, where the just causes of resentment, that are every day met with in active and busy life, are dissembled. *Marchand*, who had a particular talent at drawing up memorials, ceased not to memorialise the great towns in Holland on the state of public affairs: he dwelt on the insolence and weakness of Britain; the dangerous tendency of the Duke of Brunswic's administration; and the unconstitutional powers assumed and exercised by the Prince: he represented France as in the most flourishing state; her credit raised, her commerce extended, her naval force increased,

creased, her troops numerous, her sailors disciplined, and her resources great and unimpaired. He asserted, that the low and exhausted state to which she confessed she was reduced by the great war which ended in 1763, was but a momentary reduction of her power, and that those misreckoned very much who made the same comparison between her fleets and those of her enemies, as they had made in precedent wars: he held forth all the advantages that the commonwealth in general might derive from a close union with her at such a critical juncture; and he expatiated in particular on how much it was the interest of the republican party to promote it. By arguments deduced from such topics as these, occasionally enforced by the intrigues of *Van Berkel*, and supported by all the powers of artifice, and corruption, and bribery; the influence of the Stadtholder was in a manner annihilated in the cities of *Amsterdam*, *Dortrecht*, *Leyden*, *Haerlem*, *Gouda*, and *Rotterdam*, and even in the less considerable



towns it was greatly diminished;\* so that almost the whole province of Holland became alienated from his interests, and firmly attached to France and the republican party.

How severe a blow to the Orange interest, the defection of so considerable and important a part of the republic was, may be easily conceived, when it is considered that the single province of Holland alone pays fifty-seven and three-eighths in the hundred of all that is levied to defray the general charges of the state, while the other provinces and the *generalité* pay no

\* The eighteen cities that sent deputies to the provincial assembly of the states of Holland are, Amsterdam, Dortrecht, Delft, Haerlem, Leyden, Gouda, Rotterdam, Gorcum, Schiedam, Schonhoven, the Brill, Alkmaar, Hoorn, Enchuysen, Edam, Monckendam, Medemblick, and Purmerent. Of these only the six first mentioned had originally the right of being represented, or of voting in the states. But when William I. new modelled the constitution, that valuable privilege was extended to all the others that have been named above. Of all these cities *Dortrecht* has the precedence, as *Guelderland* has of all the provinces.

more

more all together than forty-two and five-eighths of the sums necessary for the services of the government of the commonwealth; and even of these forty-two and five-eighths there are annually deficiencies, which this great province generally supplies, and which renders, when added to its own legal proportion, its quota at least sixty-seven per cent. of all that is paid annually into the public treasury, on an average of the last twenty years. Through these deficiencies, which it makes up in this manner, the smaller and poorer provinces, particularly *Overysfel* and *Groningen*, are held by *Holland* in a kind of political dependance, and hence it commonly comes to pass, that sacrificing all the dignified sentiments of freedom and honour, which constitutional equality usually inspires, they are humbly content to act a secondary part in subordination to their great, and opulent, and powerful confederate. In consequence of this dependance, when the leading men in them perceived the revolution that was produced in the minds of a great majority in the

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the *Vroolſchaps*\* of the cities of that extensive province, they, without hesitation, conformed to their views; and though the operation of the same means that had been employed in the great towns there, to weaken the *legislative influence* of the Prince of Orange, his interest in these two small provinces prodigiously declined. The particular motives of private men, as well as of public bodies, and of some foreign states, to bring such a revolution about, are partly known certainly, partly as yet only guessed at, and, as such, both have been mentioned or hinted in the course of this work. But whenever the time shall come, that their secret views, their deep designs, and their dark intrigues shall be laid open, the most confused scene of iniquity and folly, the most strange schemes of private ambition, and of corrupt policy that ever disgraced

\* It may be necessary to mention here, once for all, that this word is sometimes written by the Dutch *Vroedſchap*. But lord Chesterfield's orthography has on this occasion been generally followed, and the word written in his manner, *Vroolſchap*, as it is here, throughout the whole work.

human

human nature since the formation of society, will appear to the world. These projects were, as has been said, the work of some persons in the republic, who expected to find their private account in the distress of their country, and of the French ambassador, a man of wild imagination, and strong passions, more enterprising than capable, and of more name than credit, who, through peevish resentment, setting aside all considerations of general and sound policy, laboured to depress the Orange party, and to raise the republicans to the administration of the commonwealth, to the total exclusion of their rivals.

In order the better to succeed in these objects of their politics, he, *Van Berkel*, and the other great republican leaders invariably held forth the necessity of reducing, within narrow limits, what they called the overgrown unconstitutional influence of the Stadtholder in the several legislatures of the state. That this necessity was more pretended than real, it is almost needless to assert, and that, even the opinion of it was  
not



not very real in the minds of those who were the most earnest in urging it, is certain. But whether so or not, it is indisputable that the idea was successfully propagated and generally received, and the consequence was an almost total loss of the legislative influence of the Prince ; so that in the year 1778, and even so early as a year previous to that period, he had scarce interest enough to carry common questions on ordinary business in the assemblies of the states, not even upon points that were indirectly admitted to be necessary or expedient. Of this numberless instances might be adduced, but one shall suffice. He had often remonstrated to them on the defenceless state of the republic, and the ill condition of the fleet and army, which was, in truth, in every respect wretched for a great and opulent people ; but as it was considered by them, that any augmentation of the army would have increased his power, they took no farther notice of his remonstrances or advice, than merely to thank him for a solicitude, which they seemed to consider as something more than merely unnecessary.

S E C-

## SECTION VII.

WHILST the influence of the Prince Stadtholder was thus weakened in the legislatures of the republic, by the intrigues of the French ambassador, and the machinations of the republican leaders, his *popular influence* was visibly declined, and this certainly without any intentional fault in him, though it must be confessed, that it is scarcely probable, that a casual concurrence of calamitous circumstances would have ever produced such a series of misfortunes as have, for these last twelve years, with very little variation, attended the measures of his administration. However, without seeking in his personal character for the principles of the decline of his popular influence, there are six causes to which this may be, not unreasonably, referred.

*First,*



*First*,—The dissensions in his own family, the different views of his confidential ministers, and the general conduct of the *Duke of Brunswic*, contributed to diminish his popularity among the yeomanry and the clergy.

*Secondly*,—The example of fortunate resistance in the British colonists in America, had an influence on the tempers and sentiments of men all over Europe, but particularly in the United Provinces. There seems to be something individual in the human mind, that easily kindles at the accidental approach and collision of certain circumstances, which, though apparently eccentric and remote, and perhaps of paltry or insignificant appearance, sometimes produce very extraordinary and unexpected effects. The American war was one of these, which affected many with the vertigo of resistance to the powers legally established, and led them to desire a retrenchment of every thing that bore the aspect of supreme authority in a single person.

*Thirdly*,—The incapacity of a weak, distracted government, such as that of the Dutch republic, often assumes the appearance, and produces some of the effects, of a treasonable correspondence with the declared enemies of the state. With some things of this nature the Prince of Orange was charged with regard to Great Britain; and the bare imputation, which seemed, in the eyes of the vulgar, justified by a chain of disastrous measures, diminished his popular influence.

*Fourthly*,—The errors and abuses in every department of the administration hurt his popularity; because, men supposed, that tolerating them when he had it in his power to remove them, was giving them the sanction of his countenance, and approving the continuance of them, upon the old maxim, that *Qui non prohibet quando prohibere potest, jubet*: for few people considered, what however is sufficiently obvious, that it is the peculiar misfortune of those who laboriously sustain a declining state, that in order to obtain



tain some immediate advantage, or to avert some impending inconvenience, they are forced to countenance, and even to multiply the most pernicious abuses.

*Fifthly*,—His endeavours to restrain the illicit trade of the Dutch with the belligerent powers, within proper bounds, rendered him unpopular in several of the great trading towns; for though there seems no reason to doubt, that in his conduct on this occasion, the Stadtholder was influenced by principles of natural justice, a regard to the laws of nations, and a conviction of the mischiefs that must have necessarily ensued from a continuation of such practices as were then pursued by many of the mercantile people, yet his refusal, constantly held by, to give the sanction of the state to the unjust requests of the merchants of Amsterdam and some other towns, for the grant of a naval force to convoy their contraband commodities, was represented as arising from less pure and honourable motives, and was generally, though unjustly, believed to have arisen from  
from

from a correspondence with England, to whose interests he was said to be so weakly and so firmly attached as not to scruple sacrificing to them those of his own country.

*Sixthly*,—The zeal of the people in his favour was a good deal cooled by the disasters and mortifications which they met with for some years; for men have always, and in every country, a natural propensity to impute the misfortunes, of which they feel the pressure, to the misconduct of their rulers.

Through the operation of all these causes the Prince Stadtholder for several years enjoyed less popular influence than most of his predecessors; and though the gentleness, purity, and benevolence of his manners and his temper alleviated, in some degree, whatever deficiency in point of spirit and ability there might have been in his character, yet these amiable qualities were inadequate to counteract the unpropitious effects which a series of measures and events had produced on the minds of the people.



While his *legislative* and *popular influence* had been thus gradually weakened or impaired, his *official influence*, which was the necessary appendage of his rank in the commonwealth, and of the employments which he held in it, was more firmly supported; for besides its being in its nature less fluctuating and more permanent, as being less dependant upon mere whim and opinion than the others were, the rank and employments which produced it were legally settled, and for the most part operated to support this *official influence* of the Prince with steadiness, regularity and effect.

This *official influence* may be divided into three distinct heads, according to the three states in which it is exercised, the civil government, the military state, and maritime affairs; and it consists more in the attention paid to advice or inclination, than in the force of a dictate or command; *auctoritate suadendi, magis quam jubendi potestate*, as Tacitus on another occasion well expresses it.

In discussing this topic, the Prince of Orange's

Orange's *official influence*, such as it was usually enjoyed by him in settled and tranquil times, in the civil government of the commonwealth, shall be first considered, and for this purpose it will be necessary to mention somewhat of the several boards or offices that are charged with the executive or distributive authority of *the Union*; for in these, as stadtholder, his influence was commonly very powerful: and here it must be previously observed, that' though indisputably the States General have the *supreme executive power* in most points that relate to the *generality*, to the common interests of the confederacy, yet they do not possess the *absolute executive power*, for by the word *supreme*, as here used, is only meant that it is the highest power known in the republic; it is a relative, not a positive term, which expresses the authority of the presiding body of the state, in comparison with the other subordinate powers established by the laws; so that, in the administration of the *executive powers*, the assembly of their High Mightinesses was bound constitutionally to act in such a man-



ner as not to contradict the fundamental principles common to all. That *supreme senate* was bound by the principles of equity, as well as by the permanent and established rules of government ; in every instance consistent with these their High Migh-  
tinesses were supreme in dispensing the executive power where the general good of the *whole* confederacy was concerned : but as the influence of the Prince in their assemblies, as well as in those of the provincial states, has been already spoken of, in treating of what has been called his *legislative influence*, we shall not dwell on it in this place, but pass on to the consideration of that *influence* which, as stadtholder, he enjoys in the councils, boards, or public offices, in which the affairs of the civil government of the state are transacted.

Of these the most considerable in dignity and power, as to what relates to the mere executive authority, is *the council of state*.

This council sits constantly at the Hague, and is composed of deputies from each of  
I the

the seven provinces of the Union ; it represents their High Mightinesses, who only assemble on stated days, and when they separate or are prorogued, it superintends the execution of the resolutions which they had taken on public affairs : it also superintends the public revenues, the necessary provisions for the army, and the affairs of the *generalité*. In this council, though the Prince had, as *stadtholder*, neither seat nor vote, he usually had considerable influence, as the members of it were appointed by persons or bodies in a great measure dependant on him, who commonly took care to nominate such persons as might be agreeable to him ; so that even at this time, when his interest is so considerably weakened in most other public bodies, the council of state remains firmly attached to him.\*

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\* As a proof of this see the missive of the council of state to their High Mightinesses, of the 16th of June, 1787, on Messrs. *Zoots van, Amerongen, D'Averhoults*, and *De Strick van Linschooten's* being deputed to the States General by the refractory states of Utrecht, in opposition to the Prince and the constitu-



The next council in point of power, in what regards the executive authority, is that which is called *the assembly of deputed counsellors* (Gecommitteer de Raaden), and it may be properly considered as the provincial council of state, for the provincial states themselves assemble in general but four times in a year, that is, in February or March, in June, in September, and in November; and of these meetings the last is the only one in which business of any importance is transacted, unless some extraordinary emergencies happen to arise, in which case the *deputed counsellors*, who sit constantly at the Hague, assemble them *extraordinarily*. The assembly of these deputed counsellors is composed of one deputy from the equestrian order, the nobles; his commission is for three years, during which time it is not

tional states of that province, assembled at *Amersfort*. The council of state declare to their High Mightinesses on this occasion, that they must hold them excused at present from executing any resolutions contrary to the preceding ones. These were in favour of the Stadtholder's interest and party. *Vid.* Resolutions of the States General, of the 1st, 10th, and 13th of June.

revocable,

revocable, but at the expiration of that term a new one must be given to the old deputy, or a new deputy must be appointed. This last measure, however, is seldom adopted, so that the noble deputy of *the Gecommiteer de Raaden* is considered as an appointment for life. Secondly, each of the great towns, *Dortrecht, Leyden, Amsterdam, Haerlem, Delft, Gouda, Rotterdam, and Gorcum*, send one deputy each, whom they commission for three years, and during that term he cannot be recalled, nor after it is expired can he be constitutionally continued, so that their appointment is merely triennial, and must necessarily be triennially changed. Thirdly, the three inferior towns of South Holland, *Schiedam, Schonhoven, and the Brill*, all together send one deputy, whom they are obliged to change once in two years; so that thus the whole council consists of ten members, for the seven towns of North Holland have their own *Gecommiteer de Raaden* for their own district, who meet alternately at Hoorn and Enchuyfen, and never sit at the Hague, where the others



constantly reside. This council, besides assembling the provincial states extraordinarily, previously prepares the business to be taken into consideration, and gives intimation of it to the several towns: the members of it also assign the reasons why they (the States) are extraordinarily convened, and during the recess they execute their resolutions. In this body the influence of the Prince of Orange has been generally circumscribed within very narrow limits, a great majority of the members being returned by the great towns, where the regencies are on some occasions far from being favourable to his interest, so that here the republican party usually predominated.

In the *chamber of accounts*, which is the next important council in the government of the commonwealth, the *official influence* of the Stadtholder was more firmly established. This board is charged with the administration of the ordinary revenues of the state, and has the absolute disposal of all the ancient demesnes of the old earls of Holland, without

without being obliged to give any account of the produce of them to any man, or to any body of men in the republic; only on some urgent and extraordinary occasions the States require a subsidy of the members, proportioned to what it is presumed that fund may have produced, or can well spare after the several officers of the board have had an adequate compensation for their time, their services, and their trouble. Demands of this kind are, however, made but seldom, and at distant intervals, so that the employments in this council are the least troublesome, and most lucrative of any in the United Provinces. The States General, on the recommendation of the Stadtholder, dispose of them in favour of such persons as have deserved well of their country, and they are in general considered as a reward for services, preferable to pensions.

There is another council, which may be considered as a revenue board, in which the influence of the Stadtholder is not inferior to that which he possesses in *the chamber of accounts.*



*accounts.* The immediate object of this board is taxation: the members who compose it examine the reasons that are offered for the imposition of duties, and they consult, much in the same manner as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the other Lords of the Treasury do with us, on the mode of raising the sums necessary for the public service, so as to be least inconvenient to private individuals, and most conducive to the general interests of the commonwealth. They have also under their inspection all the *extraordinary taxes* that are voted by the States, such as the two and an half per cent. duty, vulgarly called the two hundredth penny, the chimney money, tunnage and poundage (the last and *vul* geldt), which, however, is seldom laid on, except in times of hostility, or on the approach of a war; they are also charged, under the Stadtholder, with the superintendence of the clergy, and the direction of the university of Leyden,

Besides these councils, there is *that of the Dikes*, in which the Prince of Orange has  
great

great official influence. The seven United Provinces are in general a flat country, as level as the sea in a calm, and for the most part at least seven feet below the surface of the ocean, and of the rivers, that, taking their course through them, disembogue themselves into it; the soil is soft, hollow, fenny, and little able to resist the fury of the waves; about the time of the equinoxes particularly, when storms are violent, and the seas tempestuous, and the north-west wind, the most dangerous of any to the maritime parts of these provinces, prevalent, it of itself naturally offers but inadequate resistance to the impetuosity with which it is assailed. To remove the dangers that are justly to be apprehended from such a situation, and from such a soil, the inhabitants have recourse to art, and by this they endeavour to correct the ill qualities of the land; for fatal experience has taught them, that at those seasons all the efforts of their industry and skill are necessary to afford them protection from the violence of the ocean.



ocean.\* To prevent the inundations to which they are exposed, they are obliged to erect dikes, at prodigious labour and expence, and the superintendence of these dikes is a first-rate object of police in the Dutch government.† The sums appropri-

\* Inundations have been frequent, and the effects of them dreadful in the United Provinces. In the year 1234 the sea destroyed *Harlingen* in Friesland; some years afterwards the *Iffel* inundated *Staveren*, in the same province; in 1304 Zealand was all laid under water; and in 1509 fifty villages were destroyed there by an inundation. In 1421 the dikes near *Dortrecht* gave way, and the tide flowing, with a furious storm at north-west, seventy-two towns were overwhelmed, above one hundred thousand persons drowned, and a great number of monasteries, castles, and houses destroyed. When the wind abated and the tide ebbed, the greatest part of the country that had been inundated was cleared of water; but the remains of that inundation form what is now called the *Biesbos*, a great sheet of water between *Dort* and *Gertruydenburg*, in which the country people still pretend to shew the ruins of what they call twenty-one castles and two monasteries. In 1638, upon a thaw, the floating ice bore down the dikes of the *Iffel* near *Utrecht*, and that province, as well as a great part of South Holland, was overflowed; since that there have been several other inundations.

† These dikes are generally from sixteen to two and twenty

ated to this purpose, in the province of Holland alone, amount annually to two millions and three hundred thousand guilders, and the council that superintends them is one of the most respectable and important in the republic. This council is composed of a president, who is called the *Dijkgraaff*\*, and of four and twenty members, who are called the *Heemraaden*; these assemble occasionally at a house which they have on that part of the lake of Haerlem which

twenty feet high, and from fifty-five to eighty feet thick; the basis of them is a composition of chalk, tough clay, sand, and plaster of Paris; the sides are in some places made with piles, in others with stones or fascines, and they are commonly covered with mats or wicker-work towards the sea, and planted on the land-side with willows or other shrubs, whose roots may serve to fortify the bank. The management of them is a particular branch of business, and it is said to require ingenuity as well as experimental knowledge. Prizes are given annually to those who can shew any superiority in this kind of architecture.

\* There is in *Lincolnshire* a civil officer, called the *Dikereeve*, who takes care of the dikes and drains of the fen country; his title, as well as his office, seem to be of Dutch origin.

is



is called the *Spirinesmeer*, close to the great sluices, by which the *Harlemermeer* communicates with the Y\*; there they determine on the proper measures to be taken with regard to the dikes, and on the sums necessary to be appropriated during the year for that service: these sums they generally estimate far above what is really necessary, and though this is well known, their estimates are always allowed, and the sums stated in them are voted, for two reasons: in the first place, it is clear that the application of a great part of this money depends upon events which it is impossible for human prudence to foresee, or for human industry to prevent, but of which the effects must, however, be necessarily guarded against; and in the next place, the *excedent*

\* The Y, or Ye, is a river, or rather an arm of the sea, which lies between the *Pampus* and *Beverwyck*; it passes before *Amsterdam*, and on the other side waters that part of *North Holland*, or *West Friesland*, which is called *Waterland*; it communicates with the *Harlemermeer* by the little river *Spar*, which runs from *Sparrenden* to *Haerlem*.

of the supplies granted for this purpose, is applied to the *secret service*, and of course comes into the hands, or at least, is at the disposal of the Stadtholder, whose interest, of course, it was to preserve a commanding influence in this council, and this he preserved without difficulty, because, as stadtholder, he is the supreme superintendant of the dikes, and, as such, no man can be appointed a member of the *Heemraaden* or *Dijksgraaff*, until he is approved of by him.

The original power of judicature by the fundamental principles of society is lodged in all the members of the association collectively considered: but as it would be impracticable to render complete justice to every individual, by the people at large in their collective capacity, every nation has committed that power to certain select magistrates, who can hear with more propriety, and determine with more expedition the causes that may be brought before them; and in the Netherlands this authority was originally



originally exercised by the feudal sovereigns in their several provinces. These princes certainly, in the rude simplicity of early times, sat in person, and heard and determined suits between party and party; but when all that country which is called the Lower Germany \*, came to be united under the government of one great monarch, it became impossible that he should personally carry into execution the important and extensive trust of administering justice, and it consequently became necessary that courts of judicature should be erected, to determine controversies, and to expound the laws. Tribunals were accordingly established in each of the provinces, and a supreme court was fixed at *Mechlin*, the metropolitan city of the Belgic territory, to which an appeal lay from the decisions of the inferior judges throughout the whole seventeen provinces. When, in consequence of the revolution, the Dutch republic had

\* The seventeen provinces are sometimes called Lower Germany, *Germania Inferior*, *Germania Citra*, *Belgico Germania*. See Grotius, *Mare Liberum*, cap. i.  
been

been formed into a separate state, distinct from the rest of the Netherlands, though the original tribunals continued on their primitive foundation, the right of appealing to the court of Mechlin was taken away: for it is a fundamental principle of polity, that in whatsoever manner justice is administered, no appeal is to be allowed to any foreign jurisdiction, because, in the first place, such an appeal implies an inferiority, and every independent state is supreme within itself. Secondly, in consequence of such appeals, the laws which the legislatures appoint as the rules of their subjects' actions, might be insensibly changed; for the decisions of courts are, very properly, held in the highest regard by the people, and the precedents they form, unless flatly absurd, or obviously unjust, must, for the sake of consistence, be followed; for though the reason be not clear at first view, yet such deference is due to former times, as not to allow men to suppose that, in such important matters, their ancestors acted without consideration, or merely



through whim and caprice \*. Thus in the courts of justice of every country one precedent produces another, and they gradually accumulate until in the course of time they constitute law; what was originally fact insensibly becomes doctrine in them. Examples are adduced in support of resolutions, and where the precedents do not suit exactly, the defect is supplied by arguments drawn from analogy. In this manner, judges have it certainly in their power in a great measure to model the legal institutions of a country; and to permit the exercise of such authority to a foreign jurisdiction, would be obviously absurd. Thirdly, the business of a court of judicature is to inquire into matter of fact, and to declare the law arising from the facts †, or to expound that law. Now none of these can be properly done by a foreign jurisdiction, for to

\* Non omnium quæ a majoribus nostris constituta sunt, ratio reddi potest. Et ideo rationes eorum, qui constituuntur, inquire non oportet, alioquin, multa ex his, quæ certa sunt, subvertuntur. *Ff.* 1, 3, 20, 21,

† Ex facto oritur jus—say the Civilians.

inquire

Inquire into facts, requires evidence which foreigners cannot be supposed to come at; and to declare law, requires a knowledge which foreigners may not be reasonably supposed to possess. Equity indeed, and the idea of moral fitness, they may use as rules to direct their decisions, and one cannot help lamenting that principles derived from such pure sources cannot always apply to regulate the affairs, or to determine the contentions of men. But it is the misfortune of human nature, that neither equity, nor the idea of moral fitness, can be used as universal rules of law, nor applied in all doubtful cases. Beautiful as they may appear in theory, to reduce them into the practice of law, would create intolerable confusion; it would make statutes vain and lawyers arbitrary. And though without them, law is, doubtless, harsh, and stern, and disagreeable, yet it is much more desirable for the public good, than they would be without it; which would make every judge a legislator, and produce as many different rules of action, as there are differences of



principle, capacity, and sentiment in the human mind. Fourthly, a foreign jurisdiction cannot be presumed, with any appearance of reason, qualified to expound law; for to do this, is by signs the most natural and probable to interpret the will of the legislator at the time when the law was made, and to explain his intentions by the words, the context, the subject, the effects, the spirit, the reason, and the end of the law itself. For foreigners to do all this, is scarcely possible in numberless instances. Fifthly, a foreign jurisdiction might give judgments to the disadvantage, or diminution of the constitutional independence of the state; for unconstitutional measures are as often masked under the legal forms of a court of justice, as they are openly enforced by power. And lastly, such a jurisdiction could not well enforce its decrees, which would of course be incapable of producing any considerable effect. For all these reasons, when the inhabitants of the United Netherlands shook off the Spanish yoke, they determined no longer to allow of any  
appeals

appeals to the sovereign court at Mechlin; and the provinces settled their own judicatures, in which causes are determined in dernier resort. Of these tribunals there are six in the republic; that is, one at *Utrecht* for that province; one at *Lewarden* for *Friesland*; one at *Vollenhoven* for *Overyssel*; one at *Arnheim* for the dutchy of *Guelderland* and the county of *Zutphen*; and one at *Groningen*, for the province of that name. All of these five courts are sovereign within their respective jurisdictions, and determine without appeal on all matters, whether civil or criminal, that are brought before them; only in some particular cases, on a petition of error in the proceedings, what is called a *rehearing* is granted, in which case the states of the province appoint, by writ, the pensionaries of some towns, some eminent lawyer, and some of the counsellors of the court, as commissioners to make a revision of the process; and these either affirm wholly, or reverse totally the decree given, after which no further proceeding can be had on that cause. These courts of justice



are composed of a president, a register, and nine counsellors, who are all lawyers of some note. The Prince of Orange, who, as stadtholder of the Union, is hereditary governor of each of the provinces separately considered, has a constitutional right to appoint them to their offices, as well as to remove them (but with the consent of a majority of their own members) for corruption or incapacity. In consequence of this part of his prerogative, his influence in these councils is very great; and as it is certainly of great importance, it has been always carefully cultivated, yet in such a manner as was seldom inconsistent with the true interests of the people, which contributed very much to the popularity of the Orange cause; for there is no firmer bond to secure a cheerful submission, or to engage the affections of men, than the pure and impartial administration of justice.

In this the sovereign court of Holland is far superior in point of dignity, as well as  
juris-

jurisdiction and importance, to those that have been hitherto spoken of.

This court of justice sits at the Hague, and its jurisdiction extends over the provinces of Holland and Zealand; it determines finally, and without appeal, all causes, criminal as well as civil, that originate within the limits of these two provinces, or their immediate dependencies. It is composed of thirteen members, legally speaking, but in fact there are but twelve, for the Prince himself never attends in it. Of these, three must be natives and freemen of *Zealand*, and they are appointed to their offices by the Stadtholder, as hereditary governor of that province. Nine must, by the constitution of the court, be natives and freemen of Holland, and of these nine the Stadtholder appoints eight, the equestrian order, the nobility, of that province, having the honourable privilege of nominating one. These twelve constitute the tribunal, of which the Prince of Orange as stadtholder, and of course hereditary governor of the province of Holland, is pre-



sident, though he never acts in that capacity; but it is clear, from the very constitution of it, that he must have a commanding influence over all the members that compose this court of judicature.

The official influence which he has, as captain-general, in all the military councils of the commonwealth, is still more considerable, and indeed he may be considered as in a manner absolute in them: for besides the great legal powers vested in him by the constitution, in whatever relates to the military government, he has, from the professional character of the army, which naturally leads military men to support the authority of a single person, as decisive a power over it, as if he were the arbitrary sovereign of an unlimited monarchy.

In what relates to the *maritime affairs* of the republic, his *official influence* is confined within much narrower limits, as will appear by taking a survey of the constitution of that important branch of the public administration.

This

This part of the government is under the management of five admiralty boards, of which the *first* is that of *the Maes*, and sits at *Rotterdam*; the *second*, that of *Amsterdam*, which deliberates and determines in that city; the *third*, that of *Zealand*, which is fixed at *Middleburg*; the *fourth*, that of *North Holland*, which sits alternately at *Hoorn* and *Enchuyssen*; and the *fifth*, that of *Friesland*, which sits constantly at *Harlingen*. Each of these boards is composed of deputies, called Lords of the Admiralty, who are appointed partly by the states of the provinces in which these maritime councils are established, and partly by the inland provinces. Of all these boards, the Prince, as hereditary high admiral of the Union, is president; and as it is impossible, that he could himself in person perform all the functions of that office, he appoints a person in each board to represent him, and who presides in it during his absence. These councils, colleges, or boards transact all the business relative to building, repairing, manning, and paying the



the fleet, and as the revenues arising from the customs are entirely appropriated to this service, they have the management of them: they also take cognizance of all offences committed, or said to have been committed on the high seas; they try pirates, regulate the navigation of the state, and in general direct every thing that has any relation either judicially, or ministerially, or fiscally, to the naval administration, except victualling the fleet, which is left entirely to the captains, who provide for the officers and crews of their respective ships. When the States General have come to a resolution on the number and rates of the ships which are to be equipped, or of the squadrons that are to be fitted out, the same is signified to the council of state, who, through the High Admiral, sends the necessary orders to the several admiralty boards to take proper measures to carry it into execution: these, each accordingly, fit out as many and such vessels as, by a fixed rule laid down soon after the rise of the republic, it falls to their several proportions to equip.

Amster-

Amsterdam having a great superiority in wealth and power, always makes two-sixths of the whole armament, and the other four boards the remaining four-sixths (one sixth each) to complete it; but though the admiralty of this opulent and populous city be thus indisputably superior in real consequence to the others, in point of precedence that of the *Maes* takes the lead. When the High Admiral, or the lieutenant-admiral, his lieutenant, goes to sea, they are by the regulations of the service obliged to embark in the *Maes*: they hoist their flag on board of a ship of the Rotterdam department, and they command that squadron of the fleet.

All these several boards commission the ships of their respective squadrons on the nomination or recommendation of the Prince; and it is allowed on all hands that the one is their undoubted right, as the other is his indisputable prerogative. This makes it necessary for the public service that there should be a thorough good under-



derstanding between them and the High Admiral; for dissensions between them on the choice of ships, or the management of the squadron, inevitably throw the naval affairs into the utmost confusion; and on this account both the Prince and they reciprocally sacrificed to each other a part of their prejudices or private views, and thus concert appeared in their operations, without however producing that extensive *official influence*, which it was necessary for the firm support of the Orange interest to establish in the great department of the admiralty boards.

Such in general was the state of the power, the authority, and the influence of the Prince of Orange in the Dutch commonwealth, before the present dissensions broke out into open hostilities; and that all three were not more considerable and established on a firmer basis, is to be attributed chiefly to the ill policy of the late Stadtholder, who having in the year 1748 overcome  
all

all opposition, might, had he been an able man, have new modelled the whole republic, and every department of the government, and depressed the high republican party for ever : but he was a weak man, and being dazzled with the empty show and idle trappings of state, he did not enough attend to the substance of power. The great body of the people, who in their fury made him Stadtholder, &c. desired nothing better than totally to dissolve the old constitution, and he should have let them ; the leading members of the former government would have thought themselves well off in the castle of Louvestein, in which Prince *Maurice*, and Frederic Henry and William II. had shut up some of their ancestors in much less favourable times. But weakness or affected moderation made him lose the decisive moment ; he attempted a thing impossible, which was to please every body ; he heard all men, consulted with numbers, began every thing, and concluded nothing ; and in the end, with a most impolitic view of conciliating the affections  
of



of those who had been most violent in opposing his promotion, he introduced them into the great offices of the state. A series of imprudent measures, and a chain of disastrous events, ripened these original seeds of decay, which were thus sown in the frame of the Orange party, and under the present Stadtholder produced the events which, for these last ten years, all Europe has beheld with astonishment produced in the Dutch commonwealth.

But objects so complex, so diversified, and so interesting, both merit and require a several relation.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



